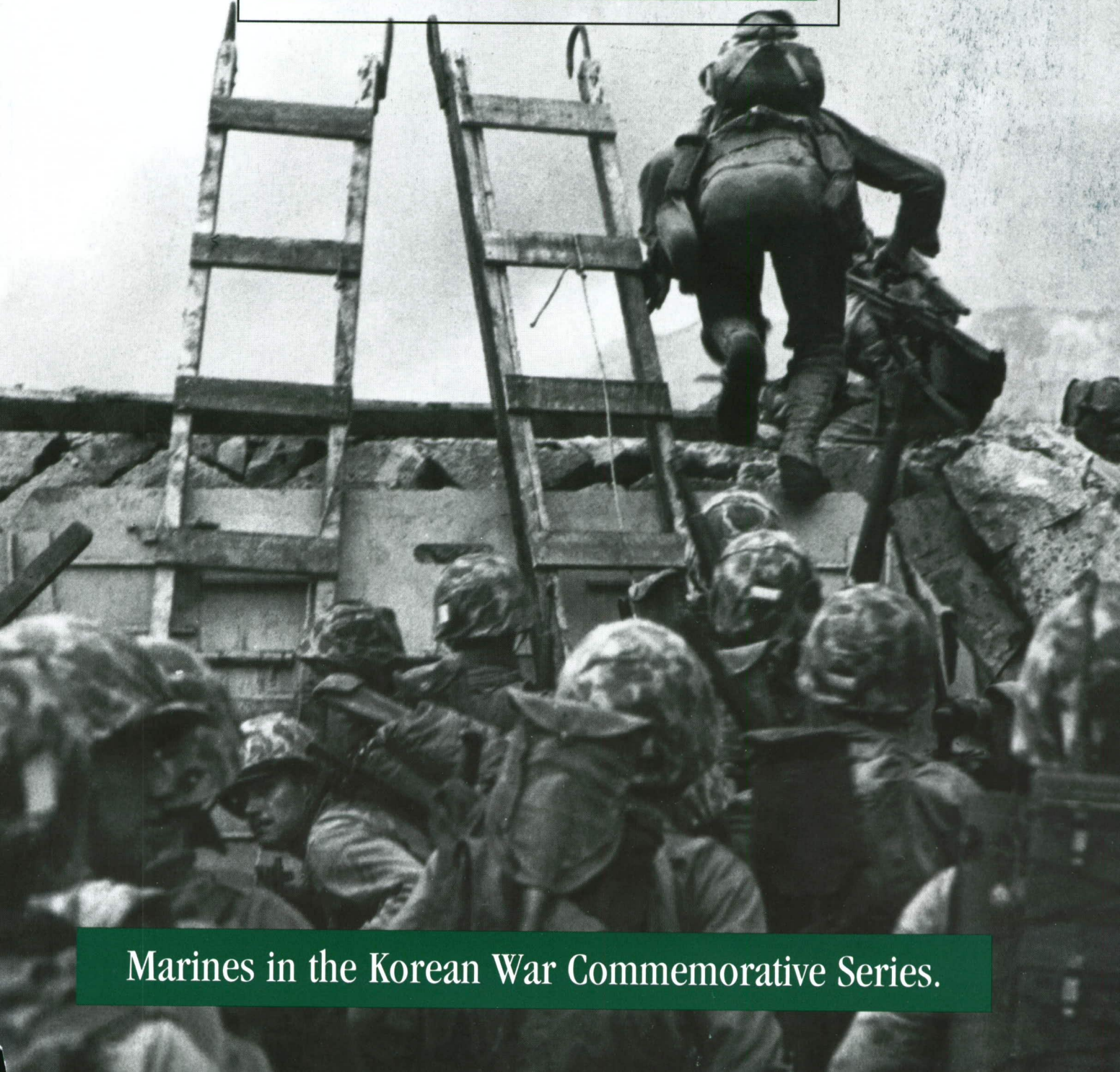
OVER THE SEAWALL

U.S. Marines at Inchon

by Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons
U.S. Marine Corps, Retired



Marines in the Korean War Commemorative Series.

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ust three weeks away and there was still no approval from Washington for the Marines to land at Inchon on 15 September 1950. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, determined to beat down the opposition to the landing, called a conference for late in the day, 23 August, at his headquarters in the Dai Ichi building in Tokyo.

Planning

As Commander in Chief, Far East (CinCFE), MacArthur considered himself empowered to conduct military operations more-or-less as he saw fit. But for an operation of the magnitude of Inchon and the resources it would require he needed approval from the highest level.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), doubtful of the landing's chances of success, had sent out the Army Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins, and the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, to review the situation directly with MacArthur. Now he would have to overcome their skeptical resistance. Collins was the JCS executive agent for the Far East Command and nominally higher in the chain-of-command than MacArthur—but only nominally. In World War I MacArthur was already a brigadier general when Collins was barely a captain. Now MacArthur had five stars and Collins four.

On this afternoon, First Lieutenant Alexander M. Haig's task was to lay out the pads of paper, pencils, and water glasses on the table of the sixth floor conference room. This done, he took his post seated in a straight-backed chair just outside the door. Haig, then the junior aide-de-camp to MacArthur's chief of staff, was destined to become, many years later, the Secretary of State.

The Marine Corps would have no voice at the meeting. The Corps had neither membership nor representation on the JCS. Admiral Sherman, not a strong champion of Marine Corps interests, was the service chief most directly concerned with the amphibious phase of the still tentative operation.

Opening Moves

Only two months before the meeting of MacArthur with Collins and Sherman, in the pre-dawn hours of 25 June, 25-year-old Lieutenant Haig, as duty officer at MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo, received a phone call from the American ambassador in Seoul, John J. Muccio, that large formations of North Korean infantry had crossed the 38th Parallel. Haig informed his boss, Major General Edward M. "Ned" Almond, chief of staff of the Far East Command, who awakened MacArthur with the news. The United States was going to war.

Four days later, and a day after the fall of Seoul, MacArthur flew to Korea in the *Bataan*, to make a personal reconnaissance, taking with him Major General Almond. Korea stretched beneath them like a giant relief map. To the east of the Korean peninsula lay the Sea of Japan; to the west the Yellow Sea. The vulnerability of these two watery sides of the peninsula to a dominant naval power was not lost on a master strategist such as MacArthur. The *Bataan* landed at Suwon, 20 miles south of Seoul. MacArthur commandeered a jeep and headed north through, in his words, "the dreadful backwash of a defeated and dispersed army."

"Seoul was already in enemy hands," he wrote in his *Reminiscences* some years later. "The scene along the Han was enough to convince me that the defensive potential of South Korea had already been exhausted. The answer I had come to seek was there. I would throw occupation troops into this breach. I would rely upon strategic maneuver to overcome the great odds against me."

MacArthur returned to what he liked to call his "GHQ" in Tokyo, convinced that to regain the initiative the United States must use its amphibious capability and land behind the advancing North

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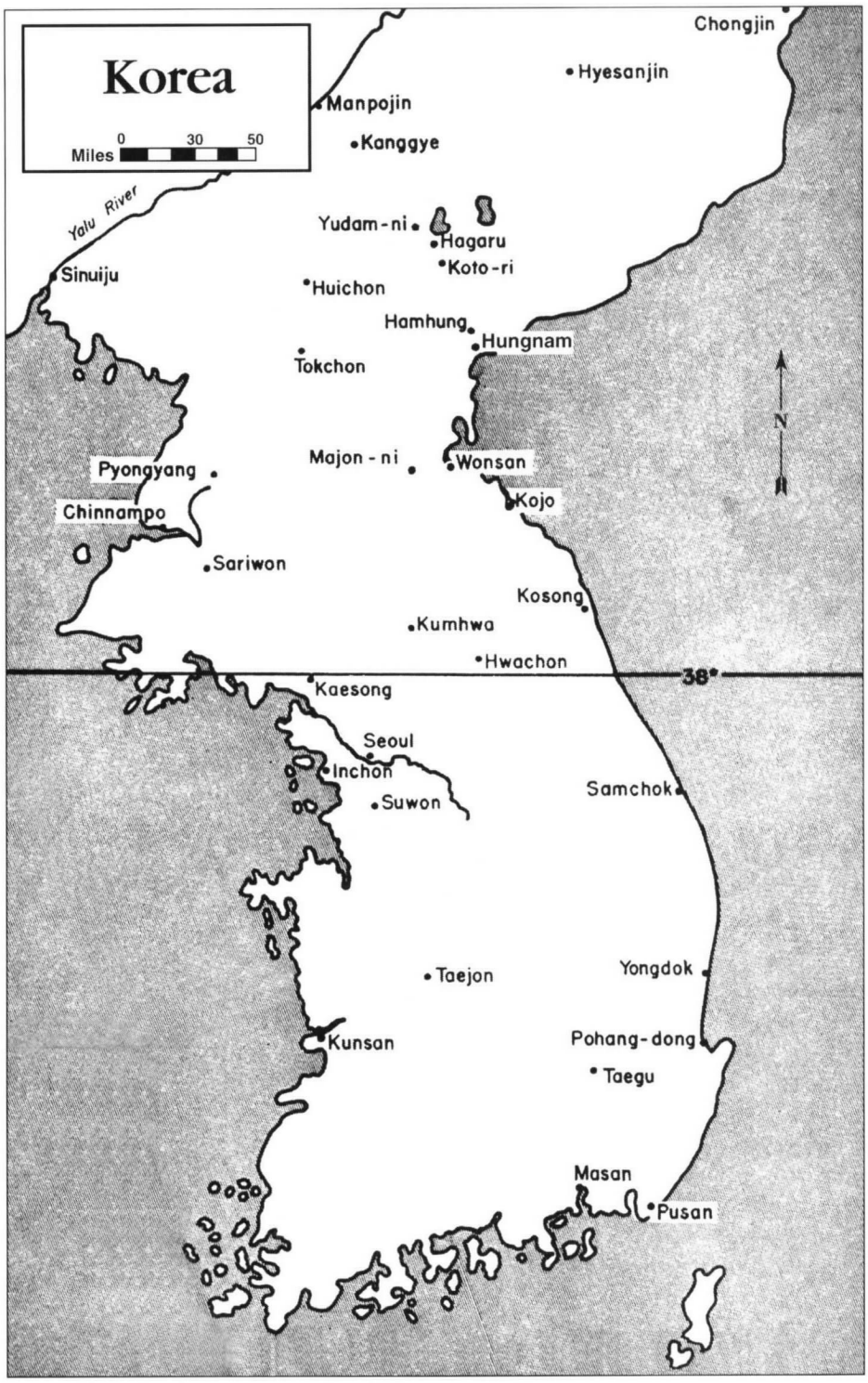
ON THE COVER: *Using scaling ladders, Marines storm over the seawall at Inchon.* Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A3191

AT LEFT: *The mop-up at Inchon turned up a group of young North Koreans, left as harassing forces.* Photo courtesy of *Leatherneck* Magazine



Koreans. He put his staff to work on a broad operational plan: two U.S. divisions would be thrown into the battle to slow the onrush of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA). A third division would land behind the NKPA and in a flanking attack liberate Seoul, the lost capital.

Unready Eighth Army

MacArthur had at his disposal in Japan the Eighth Army consisting of four divisions—the 7th, 24th, 25th, and the 1st Cavalry—all four at half-strength and under-trained. He began to move pieces of the 24th Division, rated at 65 percent combat-ready, to South Korea. His aim, he later said, was to trade space for time until a base could be developed at Pusan at the southern tip of the peninsula as a springboard for future operations.

Approval came from President Harry S. Truman for the imposition of a naval blockade and limited air operations. "The Air Force was under Lieutenant General George E. Stratemeyer, and the Navy under Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, both able and efficient veterans of the war," wrote MacArthur.

But Vice Admiral Joy, as Commander Naval Forces, Far East, commanded virtually nothing. Vice Admiral Arthur D. "Rip" Struble, commander of the Seventh Fleet, a naval officer of considerable amphibious experience, reported not to Joy but to Admiral Arthur W. Radford who was both Commander in Chief, Pacific, and Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet.

Lieutenant General George E. Stratemeyer commanded "FEAF" or Far East Air Forces. Subordinate to him were the Fifth Air Force in Japan, the Twentieth Air Force on Okinawa, and the Thirteenth Air Force in the Philippines.

Cates Offers Marines

Back in Washington, D.C., during the first hectic days after the North Korean invasion, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Clifton B. Cates, was not invited to attend the high-level meetings being held in the Pentagon. After four days of waiting, Cates drove to the Pentagon and, in his words, "kind of forced my way in."

"We were fighting for our existence," said General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., who followed Cates as Commandant. "Sherman and the rest of these fellows wanted to keep us seagoing Marines, with a

battalion landing team being the biggest unit we were supposed to have . . . . Everybody was against the Marine Corps at that time. Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson, always nagging, Truman hostile, and Cates carried that load all by himself and did it well."

Cates saw Admiral Sherman and told him the Marines could immediately deploy to Korea a brigade consisting of a regimental combat team and an aircraft group.

"How soon can you have them ready?" Sherman asked dubiously.

"As quickly as the Navy gets the ships," shot back Cates.

Sherman, overwhelmed perhaps by higher priorities, dallied two days before sending a back-channel message to Admiral Joy, asking him to suggest to MacArthur that he request a Marine air-ground brigade. MacArthur promptly made the request and on 3 July the JCS approved the deployment.

Cates did not wait for JCS approval. Formation of the 1st Provisonal Marine Brigade had already begun with troops stripped out of the half-strength 1st Marine Division. In four days' time—on 6 July—the brigade began to load out at San Diego for the Far East.

Several months before the breakout of war, MacArthur had requested amphibious training for his occupation troops. Troop Training Unit, Amphibious Training Command, Pacific Fleet, had been formed in 1943 for just such a purpose. Colonel Edward H. Forney, with Mobile Training Team Able and accompanied by an Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) training team, arrived in April 1950. A regiment in each of MacArthur's four divisions was to be amphibiously trained. Navy partner in the training would be Amphibious Group One (PhibGruOne) under Rear Admiral James H. Doyle.

A few days before the outbreak of the war Brigadier General William S. Fellers, commanding general of the Troop Training Unit, came out to Japan to inspect the progress being made by Forney and his team. Fellers and Forney were at a Fourth of July party being given by the American colony in Tokyo when an urgent message required their immediate presence at "GHQ." They arrived at the Dai Ichi—a tall building that had escaped the World War II bombing because the Imperial Palace was immediately across the way—to find a planning conference in progress with Almond at the helm. They learned that MacArthur had advanced the concept of a landing at Inchon, to be called Operation Bluehearts and to be executed on 22 July by the 1st Cavalry Division—and the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, if the latter could be gotten there in time. Next day Colonel Forney became the G-5 (Plans) of the 1st Cavalry, one of MacArthur's favorite divisions.

Shepherd Meets with MacArthur

Three days after the interrupted Fourth of July party, Lemuel Shepherd, just promoted to lieutenant general and installed as Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, left Hawaii for Tokyo, accompanied by his operations officer, Colonel Victor H. Krulak. Shepherd had been urged to go to Tokyo by Admiral Radford, a good friend of the Marines, "to see MacArthur and find out what all this thing is about."

Shepherd saw his mission as being first to ensure that the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was used as an integrated air-ground team and, second, to explore prospects for the use of additional Marine Corps forces.

"Having been with the 4th Brigade in France, I had learned that a Marine unit in an Army division is not good for the Corps," said Shepherd years later. Enroute to Tokyo he made up his mind that he was going to push for a Marine division to be sent to Korea.

General Shepherd met with Admiral Joy and General Almond on 9 July, and next day, accompanied by Colonel Krulak, saw MacArthur himself. He told them that the only hope for an early reversal of the disastrous situation was an amphibious assault against the enemy's rear.

"Here I was," said Shepherd later, "recommending that a Marine division be sent to Korea, and the Commandant didn't know anything about what I was doing."

MacArthur recalled to Shepherd the competence of the 1st Marine Division when it had been under his command during the Cape Gloucester operation at Christmas time in 1943. Shepherd had then been the assistant division commander. MacArthur went to his wall map, stabbed at the port of Inchon with the stem of his corncob pipe, and said: "If I only had the 1st Marine Division under my command again, I would land them here and cut off the North Korean armies from their logistic support and cause their withdrawal and annihilation."

Shepherd answered that if MacArthur could get JCS approval for the assignment of the 1st Marine Division, he could have it ready by mid-September. MacArthur told Shepherd to draft for his release a message to the JCS asking for the division.

Bluehearts, which would have used the 1st Cavalry Division, was abruptly cancelled. Planning in Tokyo, under Brigadier General Edwin K. "Pinky" Wright, USA, and

his Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group (JSPOG), shifted to an amphibious operation in September.

Under the U.N. Flag

On that same busy 10 July, MacArthur's mantle of authority was embroidered with a new title—Commander in Chief, United Nations Command or "CinCUNC." From then on operations in Korea and surrounding waters would be fought under the light-blue-and-white flag of the United Nations.

The sailing of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade from San Diego began on 12 July. Core of the ground element was the 5th Marines; the air element was Marine Aircraft Group 33. Filling the brigade had gutted both the 1st Marine Division and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

General Cates was in San Diego to see the Marines off. His long cigarette holder was famous; not many Marines knew that he used it because gas in World War I had weakened his lungs. General Shepherd was also on the dock and it gave him the opportunity to discuss with Cates his promise to MacArthur of a full division. Could the 1st Marine Division be assembled and made ready in such a short time?

"I don't know," said Cates dubiously; it would drain the Marine Corps completely.

"Clifton," said Shepherd simply, "you can't let me down."

Visitors from Washington

In Tokyo, where it was already 13 July, MacArthur was meeting with visitors from Washington—Army General Collins and General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, chief of staff of the newly independent Air Force. Also present were Admiral Radford, General Almond, and Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker. It had just been announced that Walker was shifting his flag from Japan to Korea, and the Eighth Army would become the Eighth U.S. Army in Korea, which yielded the acronym "EUSAK." MacArthur explained his reasons for cancelling Bluehearts and said that he had not yet chosen a new target date or location for an amphibious strike, but favored Inchon.

As soon as the meeting was over, Collins and Walker flew to Korea, where Walker opened a field headquarters at Taegu for his Eighth Army. Collins spent only an hour on the ground and did not leave the airport before returning to Tokyo.

Next day, the 14th, he was briefed by General Almond and Admiral Doyle, who had commanded Amphibious Group One since January. Before that for two years Doyle had headed the Amphibious Training Command, Pacific Fleet. During World War II he served on the staff of Amphibious Force, South Pacific.

Collins questioned the feasibility of landing at Inchon. Doyle said that it would be difficult but could be done. Before leaving Tokyo, Collins assured MacArthur that he would endorse the sending of a full-strength Marine division.

Earlier, during the planning for Operation Bluehearts, Doyle had expressed reservations over the use of the 1st Cavalry Division because it was not amphibiously trained. His relations with Almond were strained. He thought Almond arrogant and dictatorial and a person who "often confused himself with his boss."

Lieutenant Haig, Almond's aide and the keeper of his war diary, found his chief "volcanic" in personality, "brilliant" but "irascible," and, with all that, a "phenomenally gifted soldier." Almond, like his idol, General George S. Patton, Jr., designed his own uniforms and wore a pistol on a leather belt adorned with a huge crested buckle. He did this, he said, so as to be easily recognized by his troops.

General Walker, a tenacious man who deserved his nickname "Bulldog" (although he was "Johnnie" Walker to his friends), continued the piecemeal buildup of the Eighth Army. All of the 24th Division was committed by 7 July. The 25th Division completed its move from Japan on 14 July.

Tactical Air Control Problems

The 1st Cavalry Division was in process of loading out from Japan in Doyle's PhibGruOne when Bluehearts was cancelled in favor of an unopposed landing on 18 July at Pohang-dong, a port some 60 air miles northeast of Pusan. Plans developed for Bluehearts by both PhibGruOne and 1st Cavalry Division were used for the operation. For this non-hostile landing the Navy insisted on control of an air space 100 miles in diameter circling the landing site. This Navy requirement for control of air traffic over the objective area conflicted with Air Force doctrine which called for Air Force control of all tactical aircraft in the theater of operations.

Lieutenant General Earle E. "Pat" Partridge, whose Fifth Air Force Joint Operations Center was in Taegu side-by-side with Walker's Eighth Army headquarters, protested the Navy requirement that would have caused him to vacate the control of air over virtually all of the Pusan Perimeter. This began a doctrinal dispute involving the tactical control of air that would continue for the rest of the war.

Major General Oliver P. Smith

Oliver Prince Smith did not fill the Marine Corps "warrior" image. He was deeply religious, did not drink, seldom raised his voice in anger, and almost never swore. Tall, slender, and white-haired, he looked like a college professor is supposed to look and seldom does. Some of his contemporaries thought him pedantic and a bit slow. He smoked a pipe in a meditative way, but when his mind was made up he could be as resolute as a rock. He always commanded respect and, with the passage of years, that respect became love and devotion on the part of those Marines who served under him in Korea. They came to know that he would never waste their lives needlessly.

As commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, Smith's feud with the mercurial commander of X Corps, Major General Edward M. Almond, USA, would become the stuff of legends.

No one is ever known to have called him "Ollie." To his family he was "Oliver." To his contemporaries and eventually to the press, which at first tended to confuse him with the controversial Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith of World War II, he was always "O. P." Smith. Some called him "the Professor" because of his studious ways and deep reading in military history.

Born in Menard, Texas, in 1893, he had by the time of America's entry into the First World War worked his way through the University of California at Berkeley, Class of 1916. While a student at Berkeley he qualified for a commission in the Army Reserve which he exchanged, a week after America's entry into the war on 6 April 1917, for the gold bars of a Marine Corps second lieutenant.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A8377

The war in Europe, where the Marines gained international fame, passed him by; he spent the war years in lonely exile with the garrison on Guam. Afterward, in the 1920s, he followed an unremarkable sequence of duty, much like that of most lieutenants and captains of the time: barracks duty at Mare Island, sea duty in the *Texas*, staff duty at Headquarters Marine Corps, and a tour with the Gendarmerie d'Haiti.

From June 1931 to June 1932, he attended the Field Officer's Course at Fort Benning. Next came a year at Quantico, most of it spent as an instructor at the Company Officer's Course. He was assigned in 1934 to a two-year course at the Ecole Superieur la de Guerre in Paris, then considered the world's premier school for rising young officers. Afterwards he returned to Quantico for more duty as an instructor.

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 found him at San Diego. As commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, he went to Iceland in the summer of 1941. He left the regiment after its return to the States, for duty once again at Headquarters in Washington. He went to the Pacific in January 1944 in time to command the 5th Marines during the Talasea phase of the Cape Gloucester operation. He was the assistant commander of the 1st Marine Division during Peleliu and for Okinawa was the Marine Deputy Chief of Staff of the Tenth Army.

After the war he was the commandant of Marine Corps Schools and base commander at Quantico until the spring of 1948 when he became the assistant commandant and chief of staff at Headquarters. In late July 1950, he received command of the 1st Marine Division, destined for Korea, and held that command until May 1951.

After Inchon and Seoul, a larger, more desperate fight at Chosin Reservoir was ahead of him. In early 1951, the 1st Marine Division was switched from Almond's X Corps to Major General Bryant E. Moore's IX Corps. Moore died of a heart attack on 24 February 1951 and, by seniority, O. P. Smith became the corps commander. Despite his experience and qualifications, he held that command only so long as it took the Army to rush a more senior general to Korea.

O. P. Smith's myriad of medals included the Army Distinguished Service Cross and both the Army and the Navy Distinguished Service Cross for his Korean War Service.

On his return to the United States, he became the commanding general of the base at Camp Pendleton. Then in July 1953, with a promotion to lieutenant general, moved to the East Coast to the command of Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, with headquarters at Norfolk, Virginia. He retired on 1 September 1955 and for his many combat awards was promoted to four-star general. He died on Christmas Day 1977 at his home in Los Altos Hills, California, at age 81.

Joint Chiefs Reluctant

Returning to Washington, Collins briefed his fellow chiefs on 15 July. He gave them the broad outlines of MacArthur's planned amphibious assault, but expressed his own doubts based on his experience in the South Pacific and at Normandy.

The JCS chairman, General of the Army Omar N. Bradley, thought it "the riskiest military proposal I ever heard of." In his opinion, MacArthur should be concentrating on the dismal immediate situation in South Korea rather than dreaming up "a blue sky scheme like Inchon." Bradley wrote later: "because Truman was relying on us to an extraordinary degree for military counsel, we determined to keep a close eye on the Inchon plan and, if we felt so compelled, finally cancel it."

The JCS agreed that the 1st Marine Division should be brought up to strength, but stopped short of committing it to the Far East. On 20 July, the Joint Chiefs informed MacArthur that the 1st Marine Division could not be combat ready until December. MacArthur erupted: the 1st Marine Division was "absolutely vital" to the plan being developed, under the codename Chromite, by General Wright's group. A draft, circulated at CinCFE headquarters on 23 July, offered three alternatives:

Plan 100-B: A landing at Inchon on the west coast.

Plan 100-C: A landing at Kunsan on the west coast.

Plan 100-D: A landing at Chunmunjin-up on the east coast.

MacArthur's mind was now fully set on Inchon. He informed Collins, in his capacity as executive agent for the JCS, that lacking the Marine division, he had scheduled an amphibious assault at Inchon in mid-September to be executed by the 5th Marines and the 2d Infantry Division in conjunction with an attack northward by the Eighth Army. His message caused the chiefs to initiate a hurried teletype conference with MacArthur on 24 July. MacArthur prevailed and on the following day, 25 July, the chiefs finally approved MacArthur's repeated requests for the 1st Marine Division.

Gen Oliver P. Smith Collection, Marine Corps Research Center

MajGen Oliver P. Smith, left, assumed command of the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton on 26 July 1950. Col Homer L. Litzenberg, Jr., right, arrived on 16 August with orders to reactivate the 7th Marines and have it ready for sailing by 3 September.

A New CG

Late in the afternoon of 25 July, Major General Oliver P. Smith arrived from Washington and checked in at the Carlsbad Hotel in Carlsbad, California. He was to take command of the 1st Marine Division at nearby Camp Pendleton on the following day. He phoned Brigadier General Harry B. Liversedge, the base commander and acting division commander, to let him know that he had arrived. Liversedge said that

Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller

The younger Marines in the 1st Marines were ecstatic when they learned their regiment was going to be commanded by the legendary "Chesty" Puller. Older officers and non-commissioned officers in the regiment were less enthusiastic. They remembered the long casualty list the 1st Marines had suffered at Peleliu while under Colonel Puller's command. His style was to lead from the front, and, when he went into Korea, he already had an unprecedented four Navy Crosses.

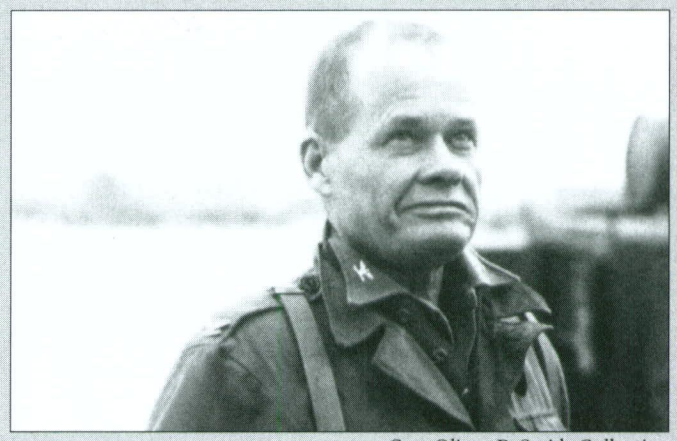
Born in 1898, Puller had grown up in Tidewater Virginia where the scars of the Civil War were still unhealed and where many Confederate veterans were still alive to tell a young boy how it was to go to war. Lewis (which is what his family always called him) went briefly to Virginia Military Institute but dropped out in August 1918 to enlist in the Marines. To his disappointment, the war ended before he could get to France. In June 1919, he was promoted to second lieutenant and then, 10 days later, with demobilization was placed on inactive duty. Before the month was out he had reenlisted in the Marines specifically to serve as a second lieutenant in the Gendarmerie d'Haiti. Most of the officers in the Gendarmerie were white Marines; the rank and file were black Haitians. Puller spent five years in Haiti fighting "Caco" rebels and making a reputation as a bush fighter.

He returned to the States in March 1924 and received his regular commission in the Marine Corps. During the next two years he did barracks duty in Norfolk, attended Basic School in Philadelphia, served in the 10th Marines at Quantico, and had an unsuccessful try at aviation at Pensacola. Barracks duty for two years at Pearl Harbor followed Pensacola. Then in 1928 he was assigned to the Guardia Nacional of Nicaragua. Here in 1930 he won his first Navy Cross. First Lieutenant Puller, his citation reads, "led his forces into five successive engagements against superior numbers of armed bandit forces."

He came home in July 1931 to the year-long Company Officers Course at Fort Benning. That taken, he returned to Nicaragua for more bandit fighting and a second Navy Cross, this time for taking his patrol of 40 Nicaraguans through a series of ambushes, in partnership with the almost equally legendary Gunnery Sergeant William A. "Iron Man" Lee.

Now a captain, Puller came back to the West Coast in January 1933, stayed a month, and then left to join the Legation Guard at Peiping. This included command of the fabled "Horse Marines." In September 1934, he left Peiping to become the commanding officer of the Marine detachment on board the *Augusta*, flagship of the Asiatic Fleet.

In June 1936, he came to Philadelphia to instruct at the Basic School. His performance as a tactics instructor and on the parade ground left its mark on the lieutenants who would be the captains, majors, and lieutenant colonels in the world war that was coming.



Gen Oliver P. Smith Collection

In June 1939, he went back to China, returning to the *Augusta* to command its Marines once again. A year later he left the ship to join the 4th Marines in Shanghai. He returned to the United States in August 1941, four months before the war began, and was given command of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, at Camp Lejeune. He commanded (he would say "led") this battalion at Guadalcanal and won his third Navy Cross for his successful defense of a mile-long line on the night of 24 October 1942. The fourth Navy Cross came for overall performance, from 26 December 1943 to 19 January 1944, at Cape Gloucester as executive officer of the 7th Marines. In February 1944, he took command of the 1st Marines and led it in the terrible fight at Peleliu in September and October.

Afterwards, he came back to command the Infantry Training Regiment at Camp Lejeune. Next he was Director of the 8th Marine Corps Reserve District with headquarters in New Orleans, and then took command of the Marine Barracks at Pearl Harbor. From here he hammered Headquarters to be given command, once again, of his old regiment, the 1st Marines.

After Inchon, there was to be a fifth Navy Cross, earned at the Chosin Reservoir. In January 1951, he received a brigadier general's stars and assignment as the assistant division commander. In May, he came back to Camp Pendleton to command the newly activated 3d Marine Brigade which became the 3d Marine Division. He moved to the Troop Training Unit, Pacific, on Coronado in June 1952 and from there moved east, now with the two stars of a major general, to Camp Lejeune to take command of the 2d Marine Division in July 1954. His health began to fail and he was retired for disability on 1 November 1955. From then until his death on 11 October 1971 at age 73 he lived in the little town of Saluda in Tidewater Virginia.

he had just received a tip from Washington that the division was to be brought to war strength and sail to the Far East by mid-August. Both Liversedge and Smith knew that what was left of the division was nothing more than a shell.

Smith took command the next day, 26 July. He had served in the division during World War II, commanding the 5th Marines in its Talasea landing at New Britain and was the assistant division commander at Peleliu. Only 3,459 Marines remained in the division at Camp Pendleton, fewer men than in a single full-strength regiment.

When the Joint Chiefs asked General Cates how he planned to bring the 1st Marine Division up to war strength, he had ready a two-pronged plan. Plan A would provide three rifle companies and replacements to the brigade already deployed. Plan B would use Reserves to fill up the division. Essential to the filling out of the 1st Marine Division—and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing as well—was the mobilization of the Marine Corps Reserve. "Behind every Marine regular, figuratively speaking," wrote official historians Lynn Montross and Captain Nicholas A. Canzona, "stood two reservists who were ready to step forward and fill the gaps in the ranks."

The 33,527 Marines in the Organized Reserve in 1950 were scattered across the country in units that included 21 infantry battalions and 30 fighter squadrons. Virtually all the officers and noncommissioned officers had World War II experience, but the ranks had been filled out with youngsters, many of whom did not get to boot camp. Subsequent reserve training had included both weekly armory "drills" and summer active duty. Someone wryly decided they could be classified as "almost combat ready."

Behind the Organized Reserve was the Volunteer Marine Corps Reserve—90,044 men and women, most of them veterans, but with no further training after their return to civilian life. President Truman, with the sanction of Congress, authorized the call-up of the Marine Corps Reserve on 19 July. An inspired public information officer coined the phrase, "Minute Men of 1950."

On 26 July, the day following JCS approval of the 1st Marine Division's deployment, a courier arrived at Camp Pendleton from Washington with instructions for Smith in his fleshing-out of the 1st Marine Division: ground elements of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade would re-combine with the division upon its arrival in the Far East; units of the half-strength 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, would be ordered to Camp Pendleton and re-designated as 1st Marine Division units; all possible regulars would be stripped out of posts and stations and ordered to the division; and gaps in the ranks would be filled with individual Reserves considered to be at least minimally combat-ready.

Eighth Army Withdraws to Pusan

In Korea, at the end of July, Walker ordered the Eighth Army to fall back behind the Naktong River, the new defensive line forming the so-called "Pusan Perimeter." Both flanks of the Eighth Army were threatened. In light of this deteriorating situation, the Joint Chiefs asked MacArthur if he still planned an amphibious operation in September. An unperturbed MacArthur replied that "if the full Marine Division is provided, the chances to launch the movement in September would be excellent."

Reinforcements for Walker's Eighth Army began arriving directly from the United States, including the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade which debarked at Pusan on 3 August.

In Tokyo, General Stratemeyer became agitated when he learned that the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, as an integrated air-ground team, intended to retain mission control of its aircraft. An uneasy compromise was reached by which the Marines were to operate their two squadrons of carrier-based Vought F4U Corsairs with their own controllers under the general coordination of Partridge's Fifth Air Force.

Reserve Comes to Active Duty

The first reservists to reach Pendleton—the 13th Infantry Company from Los Angeles, the 12th Amphibian Tractor Company of San Francisco, and the 3d Engineer Company from Phoenix—arrived on 31 July. Elements of the 2d Marine Division from Camp Lejeune began their train journey the same day. In that first week, 13,703 Marines joined the division.

On 4 August, the Commandant ordered the reactivation of the 1st Marines and 7th Marines. Both regiments had been part of the 1st Marine Division in all its World War II campaigns. The 1st Marines was activated that same day under command of the redoubtable Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, who, stationed at Pearl Harbor as commanding officer of the Marine Barracks, had pestered Headquarters Marine Corps and General Smith with demands that he be returned to the command of the regiment he had led at Peleliu. By 7 August, the strength of the 1st Marine Division stood at 17,162.

The experiences of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas L. Ridge's 1st

Battalion, 6th Marines, were typical of the buildup being done at a dead run. Ridge had just taken command of the battalion. A crack rifle and pistol shot, he had spent most of World War II in intelligence assignments in Latin America, but in late 1944 was transferred to Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, in time for staff duty for Iwo Jima and Okinawa. As an observer at Okinawa he was twice wounded.

Ridge's battalion, barely returned to Camp Lejeune from six months deployment to the Mediterranean, traveled by ancient troop train to Camp Pendleton where it became the 3d Battalion of the reactivated 1st Marines. In about 10 days, the two-element, half-strength battalion expanded into a three-element, full-strength battalion. The two rifle companies

Major General Field Harris

During the course of the Korean War, Major General Field Harris would suffer a grievous personal loss. While he served as Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, his son, Lieutenant Colonel William F. Harris, was with the 1st Marine Division, as commanding officer of 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, at the Chosin Reservoir. The younger Harris' battalion was the rear guard for the breakout from Yudam-ni. Later, between Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri, Harris disappeared and was posted as missing in action. Later it was determined that he had been killed.

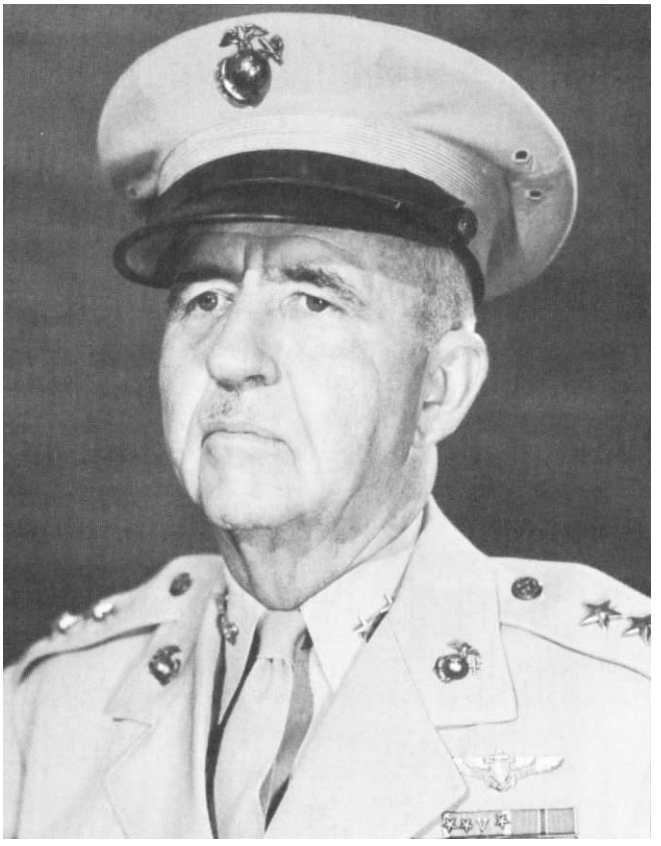
Field Harris—and he was almost always called that, "Field-Harris," as though it were one word—belonged to the open cockpit and silk scarf era of Marine Corps aviation. Born in 1895 in Versailles, Kentucky, he received his wings at Pensacola in 1929. But before that he had 12 years seasoning in the Marine Corps.

He graduated from the Naval Academy in March 1917 just before America's entry into World War I. He spent that war at sea in the *Nevada* and ashore with the 3d Provisional Brigade at Guantanamo, Cuba.

In 1919 he went to Cavite in the Philippines. After three years there, he returned for three years in the office of the Judge Advocate General in Washington. While so assigned he graduated from the George Washington University School of Law. Then came another tour of sea duty, this time in the *Wyoming*, then a year as a student at Quantico, and flight training at Pensacola. His new gold wings took him to San Diego where he served in a squadron of the West Coast Expeditionary Force.

He attended the Air Corps Tactical School at Langley Field, Virginia, after which came shore duty in Haiti and sea duty in the carrier *Lexington*. In 1935, he joined the Aviation Section at Headquarters, followed by a year in the Senior Course at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. In August 1941, he was sent to Egypt from where, as assistant naval attache, he could study the Royal Air Force's support of Britain's Eighth Army in its desert operations.

After Egypt and United States entry into the war, he was sent to the South Pacific. In the Solomons, he served successively as Chief of Staff, Aircraft, Guadalanal; Commander, Aircraft, Northern Solomons; and commander of air for the Green Island operation. Each of these



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A310952

three steps up the chain of islands earned him a Legion of Merit. After World War II, he became Director of Marine Aviation in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (and received a fourth Legion of Merit). In 1948 he was given command of Aircraft, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic. A year later he moved to El Toro, California, for command of Aircraft, Fleet Marine, Pacific, with concomitant command of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

His Korean War service was rewarded with both the Army's and the Navy's Distinguished Service Medal. On his return to the United States in the summer of 1951, he again became the commanding general of Air, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic. He retired in July 1953 with an advancement to lieutenant general because of his combat decorations, a practice which is no longer followed. He died in 1967 at age 72.

in the battalion each numbering about 100 men were doubled in size with a third rifle platoon added. A third rifle company was activated. The weapons company had no heavy machine gun platoon and only two sections in its antitank assault and 81mm mortar platoons. A heavy machine gun platoon was created and third sections were added to the antitank assault and 81mm mortar platoons. World War II vintage supplies and equipment came in from the mobilization stocks stashed away at the supply depot at Barstow, California—sufficient in quantity, poor in quality. The pressure of the unknown D-Day gave almost no time for unit shake-down and training.

Simultaneously with the ground unit buildup, Reserve fighter and ground control squadrons were arriving at El Toro, California, to fill out the skeleton 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. The wing commander, Major General Field Harris, Naval Academy 1917, and a naval aviator since 1929, had served in the South Pacific in World War II. More recently he had been Director of Aviation at Marine Corps Headquarters. He was one of those prescient senior Marines who foresaw a future for helicopters in amphibious operations.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A20115

MajGen Field Harris and a portion of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing staff arrive at Barber's Point in Hawaii in early September enroute to the Far East. Leaving the Marine transport are, from left, Col Edward C. Dyer, Col Boeker C. Batterton, Col William G. Manley, and Gen Harris.

7th Infantry Division and KATUSA

In parallel actions, MacArthur on 4 August ordered Walker to rebuild the Army's 7th Infantry Division—the last division remaining in Japan—to full strength by 15 September. The division had been reduced to less than half-strength by being repeatedly culled for fillers for the three divisions already deployed to Korea. Until MacArthur's directive, the division was not scheduled to be up to strength until 1 October and not ready for amphibious operations until 1951. Now, the division was to get 30 percent of all replacements arriving from the United States. Moreover, a week later, on 11 August, MacArthur directed Walker to send 8,000 South Korean recruits to fill out the division.

The first of 8,600 Korean replacements, straight out of the rice paddies of South Korea and off the streets of Pusan, began arriving by ship at Yokohama a few days later. This infusion of raw untrained manpower, called "KATUSA"—Korean Augmentation of the U.S. Army—arrived for the most part in baggy white pants, white jackets, and rubber shoes. In three weeks they had to be clothed, equipped, and made into soldiers, including the learning of rudimentary field sanitation as well as rifle practice. The "buddy system" was employed—each Korean recruit was paired off with an American counterpart.

Major General David G. Barr, the 7th Infantry Division's commander, had been chief of staff of several commands in Europe during World War II. After the war he had headed the Army Advisory Mission in Nanking, China. He now seemed a bit old and slow, but he knew Chinese and the Chinese army.

1st Marine Division Loads Out

Loading out of the 1st Marine Division from San Diego began on 8 August. That same day, General Fellers, back from Japan, told Smith that the division would be employed in Korea between 15

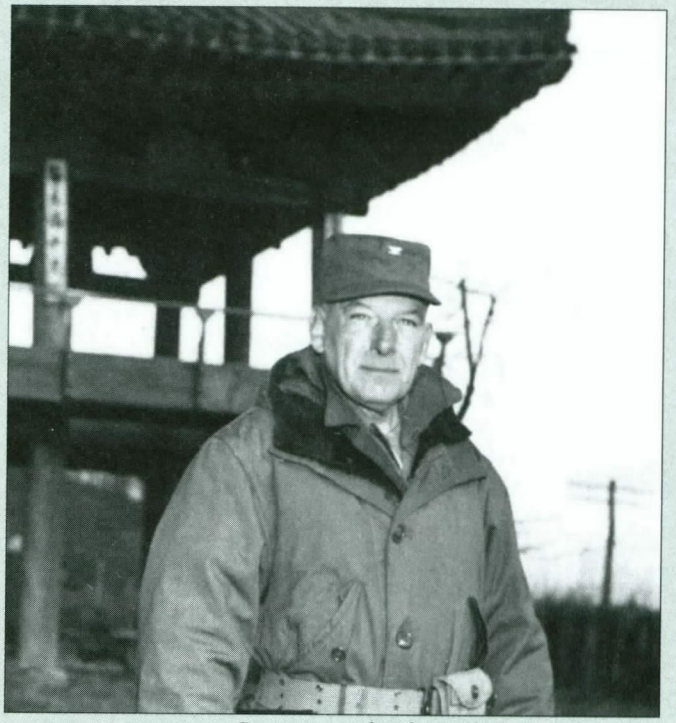
Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg, Jr.

His troops called him "Litz the Blitz" for no particular reason except the alliteration of sound. He had come up from the ranks and was extraordinarily proud of it. Immediately before the Korean War began he was in command of the 6th Marines at Camp Lejeune, very much interested in his regimental baseball teams, and about to turn over the command to another colonel. When war came he was restored to command of the regiment and sadly watched his skeleton battalions depart for Camp Pendleton to form the cadre for the re-activated 1st Marines. This was scarcely done when he received orders to re-activate the 7th Marines on the West Coast.

Litzenberg was a "Pennsylvania Dutchman," born in Steelton, Pennsylvania, in 1903. His family moved to Philadelphia and, after graduating from high school and two years in the National Guard, he enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1922. Subsequent to recruit training at Parris Island, he was sent to Haiti. In 1925 he became a second lieutenant. East Coast duty was followed by expeditionary service in Nicaragua in 1928 and 1929, and then by sea service in a string of battleships—*Idaho*, *Arkansas*, *Arizona*, *New Mexico*—and the cruiser *Augusta*. After graduating from the Infantry School at Fort Benning in 1933, he had two years with a Marine Reserve battalion in Philadelphia. Next came two years on Guam as aide to the governor and inspector-instructor of the local militia. He came home in 1938 to serve at several levels as a war planner.

When World War II came, he was sent, as a major, to England to serve with a combined planning staff. This took him to North Africa for the amphibious assault of Casablanca in November 1942. He came home to form and command the 3d Battalion, 24th Marines, in the new 4th Marine Division, moving up to regimental executive officer for the assault of Roi-Namur in the Marshalls. He then went to the planning staff of the V Amphibious Corps for Saipan and Tinian.

After the war he went to China for duty with the Seventh Fleet and stayed on with Naval Forces Western Pacific. He came home in 1948 and was given command of the 6th Marines in 1949.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A4718

After Inchon, he continued in command of the 7th Marines through the battles of Seoul, Chosin Reservoir, and the Spring Offensive, coming home in April 1951. Soon promoted to brigadier general and subsequently to major general, he had many responsible assignments including assistant command of the 3d Marine Division in Japan, Inspector General of the Marine Corps, command of Camp Pendleton, and command of Parris Island. He returned to Korea in 1957 to serve as senior member of the United Nations component negotiating at Panmunjom. At the end of the year he came back for what would be his last assignment, another tour of duty as Inspector General.

He retired in 1959, with an elevation to lieutenant general because of his combat awards that included a Navy Cross, a Distinguished Service Cross, and three Silver Stars. He died in the Bethesda Naval Hospital on 27 June 1963 at age 68 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

and 25 September.

Much of the heavy equipment to be loaded arrived at dockside from the Barstow supply depot with no time for inspection. General Shepherd arrived on 13 August to observe and encourage, joined next day by General Cates. Puller's 1st Marines sailed from San Diego on 14 August, 10 days after activation. The Navy had very little amphibious shipping on the West Coast, and much of the division and its gear had to be lifted by commercial shipping.

Among the pressing matters discussed by Smith with his superiors Cates and Shepherd was the reactivation of the 7th Marines. Nucleus of the 7th Marines would be the skeleton 6th Marines, which had already lost two battalions to the 1st Marines. The 3d Battalion, 6th Marines, a half-strength peacetime battalion with pieces scattered around the Mediterranean, became the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, with

orders to proceed to Japan by way of the Suez Canal. Fillers for the battalion and a completely new third rifle company would have to come from Camp Pendleton.

What was left of the 6th Marines arrived at Pendleton on 16 August. The 7th Marines activated the next day. Colonel Homer L. "Litz the Blitz" Litzenberg, Jr., a mercurial man who had commanded the 6th Marines at Camp Lejeune, continued as commanding officer of the 7th Marines with orders to embark his regiment not later than 3 September.

Joint Chiefs Have a Problem

Although the National Defense Act of 1947 was in effect, the relationship of the Joint Chiefs to the theater commanders was not too clear. As a theater commander MacArthur had broad leeway in his actions. The JCS faced the Hobson's choice of asking MacArthur no questions and making no challenges, or exerting their capacity as the principal advisors to President Truman in his role.

The Joint Chiefs held an intensive series of briefings in the White House on 10 August, culminating in an afternoon meeting with the National Security Council. President Truman was told that a war-strength Marine division was being assembled for service in Korea. Admiral Sherman assured the President, however, that the JCS would have to pass on MacArthur's plans for an amphibious operation.

On 12 August, MacArthur issued CinCFE Operations Plan 100-B, specifically naming Inchon-Seoul as the objective area. No copy of this plan was sent to the JCS.

O. P. Smith Departs Pendleton

General Smith sent off the first echelon of his division headquarters by air on 16 August. Two days later he closed his command post at Camp Pendleton and left by air for Japan. Delayed by shipping shortages, outloading of a third of Smith's division—essentially the reinforced 1st Marines—was completed on 22 August. In all, 19 ships were employed.

Following close behind, Litzenberg beat by two days the embarkation date given him by Smith. The 7th Marines, filled up with regulars pulled away from posts and stations and reservists, sailed from San Diego on 1 September.

Marine Versus Air Force Close Support

General Stratemeyer, MacArthur's Air Force component commander, apparently first heard of the possibility of an Inchon landing on 20 July. His first action was to instruct his staff to prepare a small command group with which he could accompany MacArthur on the operation. Almost a month later, on 14 August, MacArthur discussed the proposed landing with Stratemeyer, pointing out that Kimpo Airfield, just west of the Han River from Seoul, was the best in Korea. MacArthur emphasized that the airfield must be quickly rehabilitated from any battle damage and put to use.

By then news stories were appearing that compared Fifth Air Force support of the Eighth Army unfavorably with the close air support being provided the Marine

USS Mount McKinley *(AGC7) was the command center afloat for the Inchon landing. It also served as a floating hotel for the large number of VIPs who were in Gen Douglas MacArthur's official party or were simply passing through.*

National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-424523

brigade by its organic squadrons. On 23 August, Stratemeyer sent a memorandum to MacArthur stating that the news stories were another step "in a planned program to discredit the Air Force and the Army and at the same time to unwarrantedly enhance the prestige of the Marines." He pointed out that the Marine squadrons, operating from two aircraft carriers, were supporting a brigade of about 3,000 Marines on a front that could be measured in yards as compared to the Fifth Air Force which had to supply close air support for a front of 160 miles.

General Walker, collocated at Taegu with General Partridge, pulled the rug out from under General Stratemeyer's doctrinal concerns and contentions of unfairness, by commenting officially: "Without the slightest intent of disparaging the support of the Air Force, I must say that I, in common with the vast majority of officers of the Army, feel strongly that the Marine system of close air support has much to commend it . . . . I feel strongly that the Army would be well advised to emulate the Marine Corps and have its own tactical aviation."

National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-422492

Gen Douglas MacArthur, center, greets Gen J. Lawton Collins, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, and Adm Forrest P. Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations, upon their arrival in Tokyo on 21 August 1950. A critical conference would be held two days later at which MacArthur would have to convince these two members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that a landing at Inchon was feasible.

Top Brass Gathers in Tokyo

General Collins and Admiral Sherman—the latter had not been to Korea before—made a quick visit on 22 August to Walker's Eighth Army headquarters at Taegu. Collins found Walker "too involved in plugging holes in his leaky front to give much thought to a later breakout." On the morning of 23 August, Collins accompanied Walker on a visit to all U. S. division commanders and the Marine brigade commander, Brigadier General Edward A. Craig. Collins found these field commanders confident but weary. Collins then returned to Tokyo for the crucial conference at which MacArthur must overcome JCS reservations concerning the Inchon landing.

Major General Smith arrived at Haneda airport in Japan on 22 August and was met by his old friend, Admiral Doyle, the prospective Attack Force Commander. Smith later remembered that Doyle "was not very happy about the whole affair." They proceeded to Doyle's command ship, USS *Mount McKinley* (AGC 7). Smith's orders were to report his division directly to Commander in Chief, Far East, for operational control. His appointment with General MacArthur was set for 1730 that evening at the Dai Ichi building. Colonel Alpha L. Bowser, Jr., the division G-3, who had come out with the first echelon of Smith's staff, gave him a hurried briefing on the tentative plans for the division. "For the first time I learned that the division was to land at Inchon on 15 September," Smith wrote later.

On arriving at GHQ comfortably before the appointed time of 1730, Smith found that he was to meet first with Almond, who kept him waiting until 1900. Almond called most soldiers and officers "son," but when 58-year-old Almond addressed 57-year-old Smith as "son," it infuriated Smith. Almond further aggravated Smith by dismissing the difficulties of an amphibious operation as being "purely mechanical."

Having had his say, Almond ushered Smith into MacArthur's office. MacArthur, in a cordial and expansive mood, confidently told Smith that the 1st Marine Division would win the war by its landing at Inchon. The North Koreans had committed all their troops against the Pusan Perimeter, and he did not expect heavy opposition at Inchon. The operation would be

somewhat "helter-skelter," but it would be successful. It was MacArthur's feeling that all hands would be home for Christmas, if not to the United States, at least to Japan.

Smith reported to Doyle his conviction that MacArthur was firm in his decision to land at Inchon on 15 September. Doyle replied that he thought there was still a chance to substitute Posung-Myun, a few miles to the south of Inchon, as a more likely landing site. Doyle was having his underwater demolition teams reconnoiter those beaches.

Next day, 23 August, Smith met again with Almond, this time accompanied by General Barr, commander of the 7th Infantry Division. When Smith raised the possibility of Posung-Myun as a landing site, Almond brushed him off, saying that any landing at Posung-Myun would be no more than a subsidiary landing.

Critical 23 August Conference Convenes

Smith was not invited to the 23 August conference. Nor was Shepherd. The all-important summit conference began with brief opening remarks by MacArthur. General Wright then outlined the basic plan which called for an assault landing by the 1st Marine Division directly into the port of Inchon. After the capture of Inchon, the division was to advance and seize, as rapidly as possible, Kimpo Airfield, the town of Yongdung-po, and the south bank of the Han River. The division was then to cross the river, capture Seoul, and seize the dominant ground to the north. Meanwhile, the 7th Infantry Division was to land behind the Marines, advance on the right flank, secure the south bank of the Han southeast of Seoul and the high ground north of Suwon. Thereafter, X Corps—1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions— would form the anvil against which the Eighth Army, breaking out of the Pusan Perimeter, would deliver the hammer blows that would destroy the North Korean Army.

After Wright's briefing, Doyle, as the prospective Attack Force commander, gave a thorough analysis of the naval aspects of the landing. Of greatest concern to Doyle were the tides. A point of contention was the length of the naval gunfire preparation. Doyle argued for three to four days of pre-landing bombardment by air and naval gunfire, particularly to take out the shore batteries. MacArthur's staff disputed this on the basis of the loss of tactical surprise. Admiral Sherman was asked his opinion and replied, "I wouldn't hesitate to take a ship up there."

"Spoken like a Farragut," said MacArthur.

With his concerns brushed aside, Doyle concluded his briefing with "the best that I can say is that Inchon is not impossible."

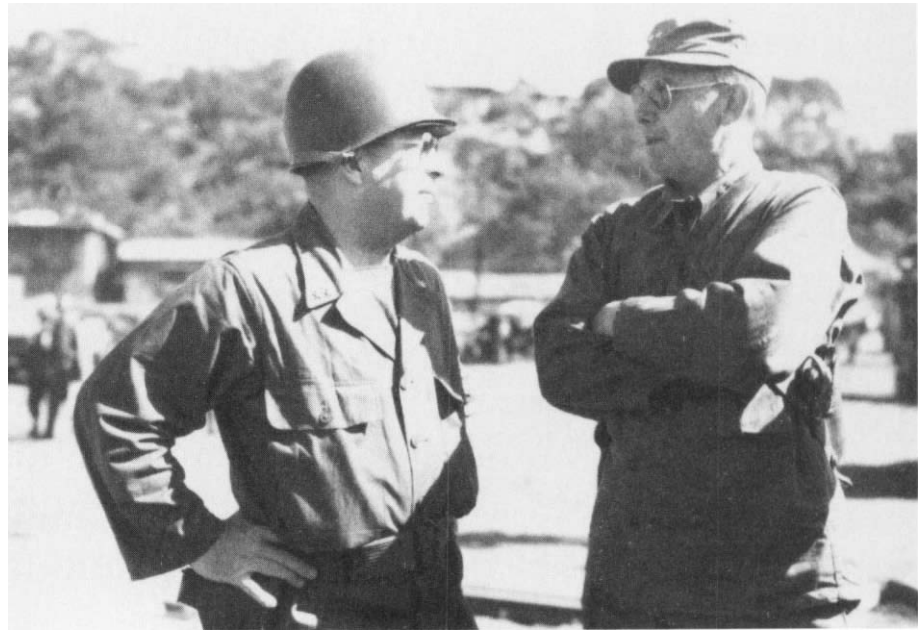
Collins questioned the ability of the Eighth Army to link up quickly with X Corps. He suggested Kunsan, to the south, as an alternate landing site. Sherman, in general terms, supported Collins' reservations. General MacArthur sat silently, puffing his pipe, for several moments. He then spoke and all agree that his exposition was brilliant. He dazzled and possibly confused his audience with an analogy from the French and Indian War, Wolfe's victory at Quebec: "Like Montcalm, the North Koreans will regard the Inchon landing as impossible. Like Wolfe I [can] take them by surprise."

As he himself remembered his summation years later in his memoirs:

> The Navy's objections as to tides, hydrography, terrain, and physical handicaps are indeed substantial and pertinent. But they are not insuperable. My confidence in the

MajGen David G. Barr, left, Commanding General of the U. S. Army's 7th Infantry Division meets with MajGen Edward M. Almond, Commanding General, X Corps, to discuss the Inchon landing. The 7th Division would land behind the Marines, advance on their right flank, and seize the commanding ground south of Seoul.

National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC349013

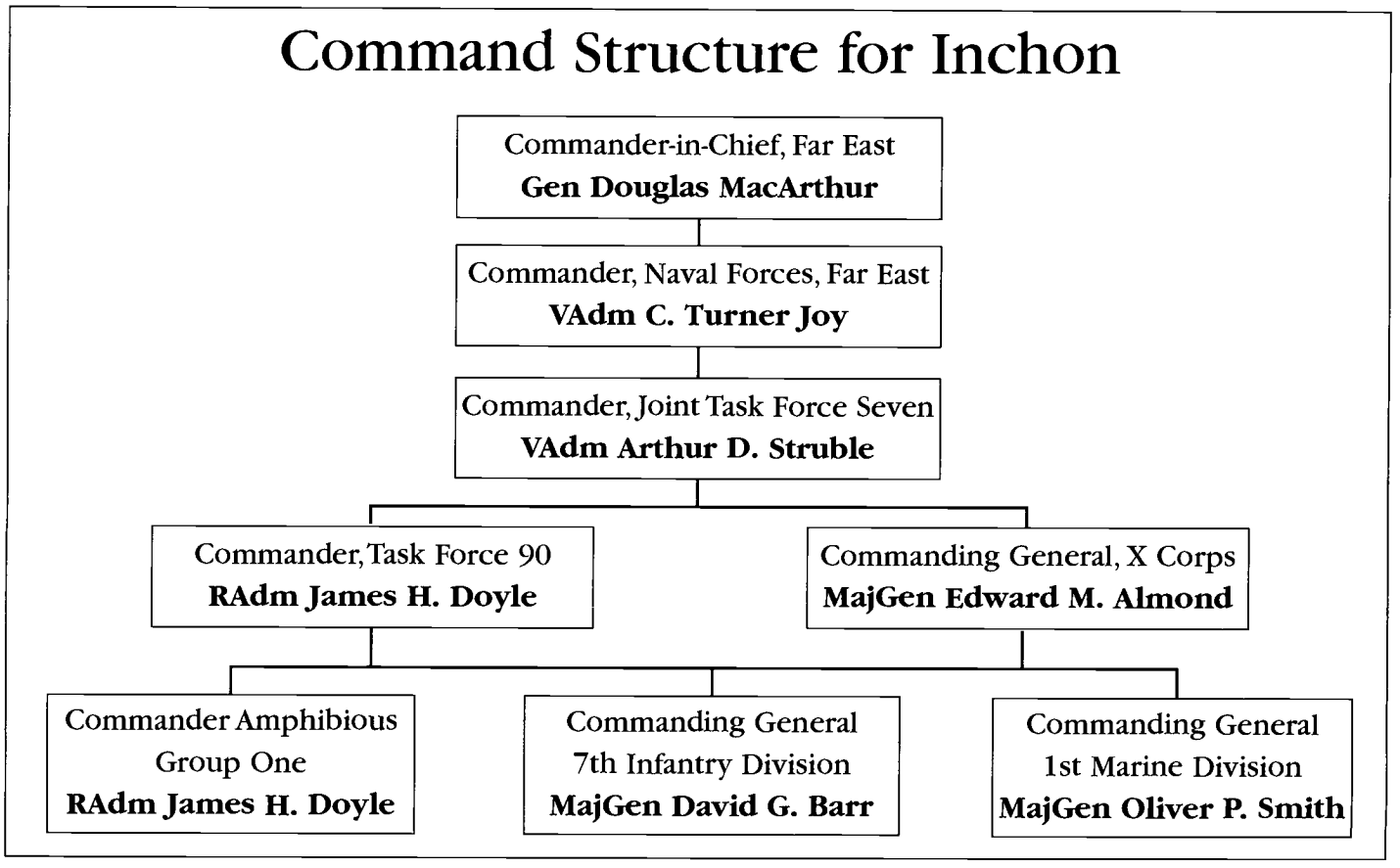


Navy is complete, and in fact I seem to have more confidence in the Navy than the Navy has in itself . . . . As to the proposal for a landing at Kunsan, it would indeed eliminate many of the hazards of Inchon, but it would be largely ineffective and indecisive. It would be an attempted envelopment which would not envelop. It would not sever or destroy the enemy's supply lines or distribution center, and would therefore serve little purpose. It would be a "short envelopment," and nothing in war is more futile. But seizure of Inchon and Seoul will cut the enemy's supply line and seal off the entire southern peninsula . . . . This in turn will paralyze the fighting power of the troops that now face Walker . . . . If my estimate is inaccurate and should I run into a defense with which I cannot cope, I will be there personally and will immediately withdraw our forces before they are committed to a bloody setback. The only loss then will be my professional reputation. But Inchon will not fail. Inchon will succeed. And it will save 100,000 lives.

Others at the conference recalled MacArthur's closing words at the conference as being: "*We* shall land at Inchon, and *I* shall crush them." This said, MacArthur knocked the ashes of his pipe out into a glass ashtray, making it ring, and stalked majestically out of the room.

General Collins still harbored reservations. He thought a main point had been missed: what was the strength of the enemy at Inchon and what was his capability to concentrate there?

Admiral Sherman was momentarily carried away by MacArthur's oratory, but once removed from MacArthur's personal magnetism he too had second thoughts. Next morning, 24 August, he gathered together in Admiral Joy's office the principal Navy and Marine Corps commanders. Present, in addition to Sherman and Joy, were Admirals Radford and Doyle and Generals Shepherd and Smith. Despite general indignation over MacArthur's failure to give due weight to naval considerations, it was now abundantly clear that the landing would have to made at or near Inchon. But perhaps there was still room for argument for another landing site with fewer hydrographic problems. Shepherd announced that he was going to see MacArthur once again before returning to Pearl Harbor and that he would make a



final plea for a landing south of Inchon in the vicinity of Posung-Myun.

Disappointment for General Shepherd

Shepherd, accompanied by Krulak, arrived at GHQ for his scheduled visit with MacArthur but was short-stopped by Almond who dismissed the Posung-Myun site, saying that Inchon had been decided upon and that was where the landing would be. The discussion became heated. Fortunately, MacArthur entered the room and waved Shepherd and Krulak into his office.

Shepherd had some expectation of being named the landing force commander. Admiral Sherman had recommended, without any great amount of enthusiasm, that Shepherd command X Corps for the operation because of his great amphibious experience and the expertise of his Fleet Marine Force, Pacific staff. General Wright on MacArthur's staff also recommended it, but a rumor was prevalent that Almond would get X Corps. MacArthur confirmed this intention, saying he would liked to have had Shepherd as commander, but that he had promised it to Almond. He asked if Shepherd would go along as his amphibious advisor. Shepherd hedged slightly. He said he would gladly go along as an observer.

Shepherd showed no rancor, then or later, at not getting command. He and Almond were both Virginians and both had gone to Virginia Military Institute—Almond, class of 1915 and Shepherd, class of 1917. Their personal relations were good but not close. Shepherd later characterized Almond as "an excellent corps commander. He was energetic, forceful, brave, and in many ways did a good job under difficult conditions." O. P. Smith would not come to share Shepherd's good opinion of Almond.

Plans Progress

The day following the 23 August conference, General Stratemeyer directed his staff to develop a FEAF plan to support the landing. The plan was to be separate from the CinCFE plan and was to provide mission direction for all combat aircraft not essential to the close support of the Eighth Army.

MacArthur, on 26 August, formally announced Almond's assignment as commanding general of X Corps. MacArthur had told him that he would continue, at the same time, to be the chief of staff of Far East Command. MacArthur's prediction was that Almond would soon be able to return to Tokyo. The landing at Inchon and subsequent capture of Seoul would end the war.

General Bradley's assessment of Almond was less than enthusiastic:

> Ned Almond had never commanded a corps—or troops in an amphibious assault. However, he and his staff, mostly recruited from MacArthur's headquarters, were ably backstopped by the expertise of the Navy and Marines, notably that of Oliver P. Smith, who commanded the 1st Marine Division, which would spearhead the assault.

MacArthur had not asked Collins and Sherman to approve his plan nor would they have had the authority to do so. The best they had to take back with them to Washington was a fairly clear concept of MacArthur's intended operations.

Collins and Sherman reported to Bradley and the other chiefs what they had learned about the Inchon plan, repeating their own misgivings. On 26 August, Bradley briefed President Truman and Secretary Johnson. The President was more optimistic than the chiefs.

'Conditional' Approval

On 28 August, the Joint Chiefs sent MacArthur a "conditional" approval, concurring in an amphibious turning movement, either at Inchon or across a favorable beach to the south. Chief "conditions" were that MacArthur was to provide amplifying details and keep them abreast of any modification of his plans. The Joint Chiefs specifically suggested preparation of an alternate plan for a landing at Kunsan.

X Corps dated its Operation Order No. 1, written largely by the facile pen of Colonel Forney, as 28 August; distribution was a day or so later. The 1st Marine Division "was charged with the responsibility as the Landing Force to assault INCHON, conduct beachhead operations, seize and protect KIMPO airfield, then advance to the HAN River line west of SEOUL. This achieved, the Division was further directed to seize SEOUL, and the commanding ground north of SEOUL, on order."

O. P. Smith's division staff, then on the *Mount McKinley*, was at half strength. Part of the remainder was enroute from the United States; part was with Craig's 1st Marine Brigade in the south of Korea. The brigade, although an organic part of the division, was still under the operational control of General Walker. Smith's staff, directed by Colonel Gregon A. Williams as chief of staff, worked well with Doyle's PhibGruOne staff. Above this harmonious relationship, the

exact status of the more senior commands was indistinct and vaguely defined. From amidst a welter of paper, misunderstanding, ragged tempers, and sleep deprivation, Division Order 2-50, expanding on the corps order, emerged on 4 September.

Smith wrote later in the *Marine Corps Gazette*:

> By dedicated work on the part of the Division staff, with the wholehearted support of Adm Doyle's PhibGruOne staff, within three days a detailed plan for the Inchon Landing was drawn up, and two days later an advance planning draft of 1stMarDiv OpO 2-50 (Inchon Landing) was issued.

Time available for planning was so short that the assault regiments, contrary to amphibious doctrine, would get rigid landing plans drawn up completely by division.

The always dapper General Stratemeyer, seeking to solidify his contention that he was General MacArthur's tactical air commander, conferred with Joy, Struble, and Almond at CinCFE headquarters on 30 August. All that he could get was a general agreement on the adequacy of a CinCFE 8 July directive, "Coordination of Air Effort of Far East Air Forces and United States Naval Forces, Far East." Building on that, Stratemeyer sent a message to MacArthur, the gist of it being: "It is recognized that ComNavFE must have control of air operations within the objective area during the amphibious phase. Air operations outside of the objective area are part of the

Junior officers and enlisted Marines did not get a briefing on their unit's role in the landing until embarked in amphibious shipping enroute to the objective area. However, by then, because of leakage to the press, it was an open secret that the Marines were going to land at Inchon.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A2681

overall air campaign, and during the amphibious phase contribute to the success of the amphibious operation."

MacArthur's headquarters issued Operation Order No. 1 on 30 August, but neither a copy of this order nor any other amplifying detail had reached Washington by 5 September. On that date the chiefs sent a further request for details to MacArthur. Choosing to consider the 28 August JCS message to be sufficient approval, MacArthur dismissed the request with a brief message, stating "the general outline of the plan remains as described to you."

Later he would write that his plan "was opposed by powerful military in Washington." He knew that Omar Bradley, the JCS chairman, had recently testified to Congress that large-scale amphibious operations were obsolete. He disliked Bradley personally and derisively referred to him as a "farmer."

Both Bradley and Truman came from Missouri working-class families and were proud of it. A routine had been established under which the Joint Chiefs kept Truman informed, usually by a personal briefing by Bradley, of the current situation in Korea.

On 7 September, MacArthur received a JCS message which he said chilled him to the marrow of his bones. The message asked for an "estimate as to the feasibility and chance of success of projected operation if initiated on planned schedule."

The offending message reminded MacArthur that all reserves in the Far East had been committed to the Eighth Army and all available general reserves in the United States—except for the 82d Airborne Division—had been committed to the Far East Command. No further reinforcement was in prospect for at least four months. In light of this situation, a fresh evaluation of Inchon was requested.

MacArthur Protests

An indignant MacArthur fired back an answer, the concluding paragraph of which said: "The embarkation of the troops and the preliminary air and naval preparations are proceeding according to schedule. I repeat that I and all my commanders and staff officers are enthusiastic for and confident of the success of the enveloping movement."

The last sentence was manifestly not true. Lack of enthusiasm was readily apparent at all levels of command.

Next day, 8 September, the JCS sent MacArthur a short, contrite message: "We approve your plan and the President has been informed." The phrase "the President has been informed" annoyed MacArthur. To him it implied something less than presidential approval and he interpreted it as a threat on President Truman's part to overrule the Joint Chiefs. General Collins, for one, had no recollection of Truman ever expressing any doubt about the success of the Inchon landing or any inclination to override the actions of the JCS with respect to the operation.

Beach Reconnaissance

According to the intelligence available to General Smith, the enemy had about 2,500 troops in the Inchon-Kimpo region, including at least two battalions of the *226th Independent Marine Regiment* and two companies of the *918th Artillery Regiment.* The North Koreans had apparently prepared strong defensive positions. Reconnaissance reports indicated 106 hard targets, such as gun emplacements, along the Inchon beaches.

Some of the best beach intelligence was obtained by Navy offshore reconnaissance. Best known are the exploits of Lieutenant Eugene F. Clark, ex-enlisted man and an experienced amphibious sailor. He and two South Koreans left Sasebo on 31 August on board the British destroyer HMS *Charity*, transferred the next morning to a South Korean frigate, and landed that evening on Yong-hong-do, 14 miles off Inchon and one of the hundreds of islands that dotted Korea's west coast. The islanders were friendly. Clark organized the island's teenagers into coastwatching parties and commandeered the island's only motorized sampan. For two weeks he fought a nocturnal war, capturing more sampans, sending agents into Inchon, and testing the mud flats for himself. His greatest accomplishment was discovering that one of the main navigation lights for Flying Fish Channel was still operable. GHQ at Tokyo instructed him to turn on the light at midnight on 14 September. This he would do.

Anticipated hydrographic conditions were much more frightening than the quality of expected enemy resistance. Doyle's Attack Force would have to thread its way from the Yellow Sea through the tortuous Flying Fish Channel. As had already been determined, the 15th of September was the best day of the month because of the height and spacing of the tides. The morning high tide—an incredible 31.5 feet—would be at 0659 and the evening high tide at 1919. In between these times, as the tide fell, the currents would rip out of the channel at seven or eight knots, exposing mud flats across which even amphibian tractors

Terrain Handbook No. 65: Seoul and Vicinity (GHQ, Far East Command, 16 August 1950)

This pre-landing aerial photograph shows clearly the convoluted nature of the Inchon "beachhead." MajGen Oliver P. Smith, commanding the landing force, considered Wolmi-do, the island at the lower left of the photo, the key to the whole situation. Seizure of Wolmi-do would precede the main landings on Inchon itself.

could not be expected to crawl.

Wolmi-do: Key to Operation

Wolmi-do ("Moon Tip Island"), the long narrow island that formed the northern arm of Inchon's inner harbor, was thought to have about 500 defenders. Wolmi-do harbor was connected to the Inchon dock area by a 600-yard-long causeway. "Wolmi-do," wrote Smith, was "the key to the whole operation."

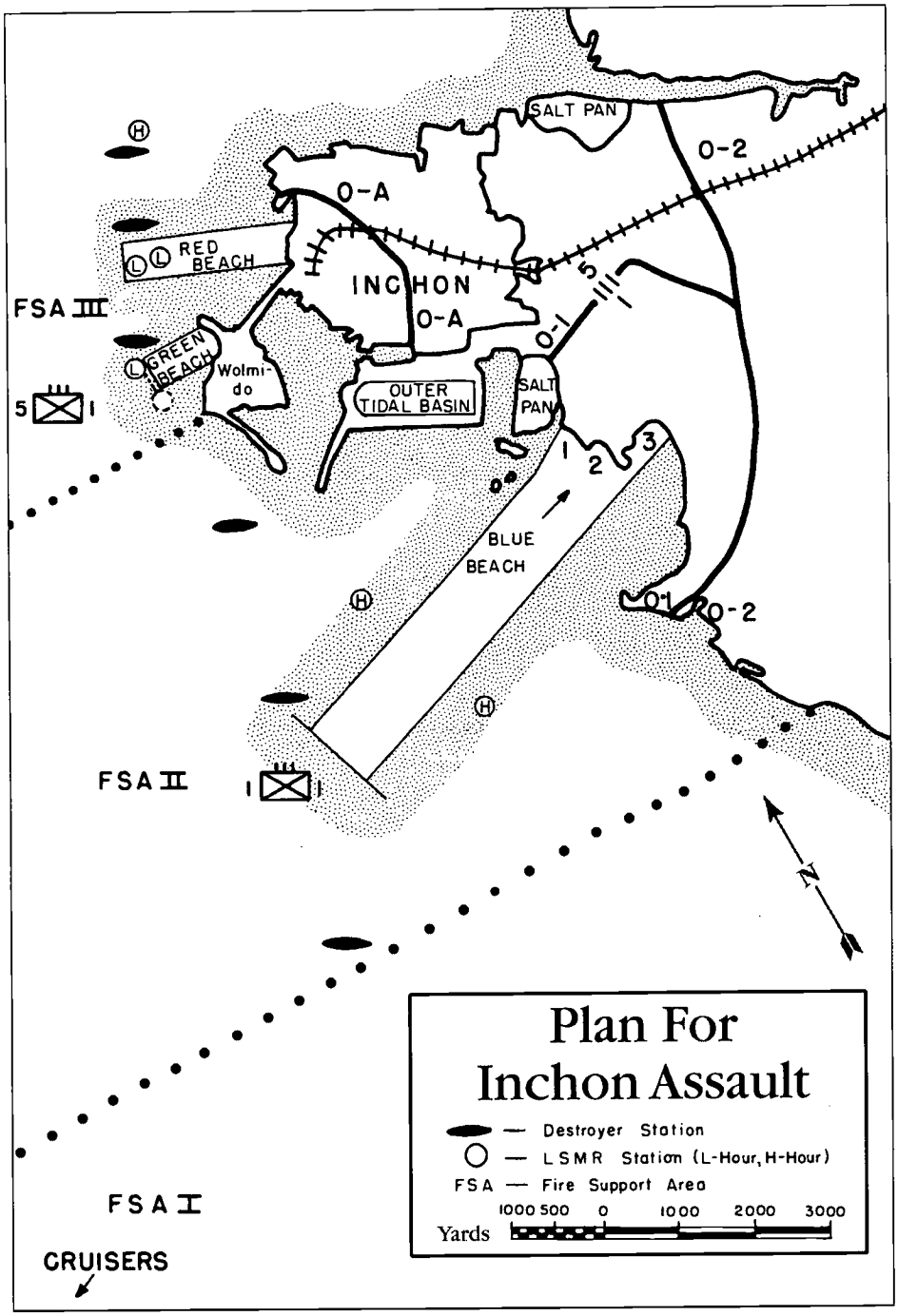
Brigade staff officers, headed by their chief of staff, Colonel Edward W. Snedeker, were called to Japan from Pusan. They recommended that the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, be used for the assault of Wolmi-do.

Smith's plan, as it emerged, was to take Wolmi-do on the morning tide by landing the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, across Green Beach. Then would come a long wait of 12 hours until the evening tide came in and the remainder of the division could continue the landing. The rest of the 5th Marines would cross Red Beach to the north of Wolmi-do, while Puller's 1st Marines landed over Blue Beach in the inner harbor to the south. Designation of the landing sites as "beaches" was misleading; the harbor was edged with cut-granite sea walls that would have to be scaled or penetrated.

Colonel Snedeker recommended that the new 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment be added to the troop list. The assignment of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Marines to the division was approved by GHQ on 3 September. The Eighth Army was instructed to provide them weapons.

Almond asked Smith to take part in a war-gaming of the operation. Smith saw it as nothing more than a "CPX" or command post exercise and a waste of precious time. He sent a major in his place.

Almond inspected units of Barr's 7th Division at their camps—Fuji, McNair, McGill, Drake, and Whittington—between 31 August through 3 September. His aide,



First Lieutenant Haig, accompanied him and took extensive notes. With few exceptions, Almond gained a "good" to "excellent" impression of the units he visited.

On the morning of 2 September Almond met with the officers of his Corps staff who were involved in his war game. He pointed out the necessity for frequent visits to subordinate units by commanding officers and the need for strong, well-organized, defenses for Corps headquarters. "The front line is the perimeter of the place where you happen to be," said Almond.

Meanwhile, the main body of the 1st Marine Division arrived at Kobe, Japan—except for the 5th Marines, which was still at Pusan, and the 7th Marines, which was still at sea.

Typhoon Jane Disrupts Embarkation

Typhoon Jane, with winds up to 74 miles an hour, struck Kobe on 3 September. Two feet of water covered the docks. One ship, with all the division's signal gear, settled to the bottom at her pier. All unloading and loading stopped for 24 hours. Property sergeants, called in from the outlying battalions, worked frantically to sort out their units' gear.

Adding to General Smith's worries, the availability of the 5th Marines was now challenged. General Walker, deeply involved in the bitter defense of the Naktong Bulge, strongly opposed the release of this now-seasoned regiment from his Eighth Army. To meet Walker's objections, and influenced by his own favorable impression of the 7th Division, Almond sent Colonel Forney, now the Marine Deputy Chief of Staff, X Corps, to ask O. P. Smith whether the 7th Marines would arrive in time to be substituted for the 5th Marines, or alternatively, if not, would the 32d Infantry be acceptable?

A conference on the proposed substitution was held on the evening of 3 September. Present, among others, were Generals Almond and Smith and Admirals Joy, Struble, and Doyle. Strangely, General Barr, the 7th Division's commander, was not there. The discussion became heated. Smith argued that the proposal went beyond a considered risk. If the substitution were made, he declared, he would change his scheme of maneuver. He would call off the landing of the 1st Marines over Blue Beach and give them the 5th Marines' mission of landing on Red Beach with the 32d Infantry following behind.

Admiral Struble (Shepherd thought him "slippery") resolved the contretemps by suggesting that a regiment of Barr's 7th Division be immediately embarked to stand off Pusan as a floating reserve,

allowing the release of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade. In General Smith's mind, Almond's proposal exemplified the wide gulf separating Army and Marine Corps thinking. As Colonel Bowser, General Smith's operations officer, remembered it, Doyle and Smith "came back about 11 o'clock having won their point, that the [Marine] brigade must come out of the Pusan perimeter and be part of our landing force."

The *Mount McKinley*, flagship of the Attack Force—with Smith on board so as to be in a better position to supervise the out-loading—set sail from Tokyo for Kobe on 4 September, arriving there early the next afternoon. That evening Smith called a conference of all available Marine Corps commanders to stress the urgency of the operation.

Almond Inspects Marines

A day later, 6 September, General Almond came to Kobe to inspect 1st Marine Division units. He lunched with the staff noncommissioned officers at Camp Otsu accompanied by General Smith and Lieutenant Colonel Allan Sutter, then visited the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 1st Marines. Afterwards he went to Camp Sakai near Osaka to see the 11th Marines, the division's artillery regiment commanded by Colonel James H. Brower, and was favorably impressed." He commented in his diary: "A large percentage of the troops were drawn from active Marine reserve units . . . . The Army should have done likewise but did not."

In the evening Smith and his staff briefed him on the division's operation plan. Again Almond was favorably impressed, but he thought Smith's planned subsequent moves ashore too slow and deliberate. He stressed to Smith the need for speed in capturing Kimpo Airfield and Seoul itself. Smith was less impressed with Almond, saying: "The inspection consisted [of Almond] primarily questioning men, I suppose for the purpose of finding out what made Marines tick."

In the 1st Marine Division, operational planning trickled down to the battalion level. The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, under Lieutenant Colonel Thomas L. Ridge, had steamed comfortably to Japan in the *General Simon B. Buckner* (AP 123) and was ensconced in what had been the barracks for a battalion of the 24th Infantry Division at Otsu on the south shore of Lake Biwa. There was no room for field training and the best the battalion could do was road-bound conditioning marches. The commanding officer and the three majors in the battalion were summoned to a meeting on board the regimental command ship berthed in Kobe. There had been a plethora of rumors, but now for the first time they learned officially that they were to land at Inchon. The regimental S-2, Captain Stone W. Quillian, went over the beach defenses, tapping a large map

President Harry S. Truman and Marine Commandant Gen Clifton B. Cates exchange warm greetings at a Marine Corps field demonstration at Quantico in June 1950, 10 days before the outbreak of the Korean War. This friendly relationship dissolved when Truman, in an ill-advised note, called the Marine Corps "the Navy's police force."

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A407260

studded with suspected weapons emplacements. The S-3, Major Robert E. Lorigan, then briefed the scheme of maneuver. The 3d Battalion would be the right flank unit of the main landing. These were the D-Day objectives. *Tap, tap.* This piece of high ground was the battalion's objective. *Tap, tap.* This hook of land on the extreme right flank had to be taken. *Tap, tap.* The landing would be at 1730; it would be dark at 1900. There were no enthusiastic cheers from the listeners.

Then the regimental commander, Chesty Puller, got to his feet. "You people are lucky," he growled. "We used to have to wait every 10 or 15 years for a war. You get one every five years. You people have been living by the sword. By God, you better be prepared to die by the sword."

The troop list for the landing force totalled 29,731 persons, to be loaded out in six embarkation groups. Four groups would load out of Kobe, one group out of Pusan, and one group—made up of the Army's 2d Engineer Special Brigade—out of Yokohama. Not all units could be combat loaded; some compromises had to be accepted.

One Marine Corps unit that was not ready to go was the 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion, activated but not yet combat ready. The Army's Company A, 56th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, was substituted.

President Writes Letter

As the Marines combat loaded their amphibious ships at Kobe, the Pacific edition of *Stars and Stripes* reached them with a story that President Truman had called them "the Navy's police force." This compounded a previously perceived insult when the President labeled the United Nations intervention in Korea a "police action." The enraged Marines chalked on the tarpaulins covering their trucks and tanks, "Horrible Harry's Police Force" and similar epithets.

What had happened was that on 21 August, Congressman Gordon L. McDonough of California had written President Truman a well-intentioned letter urging that the Marines be given a voice on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The President fired back a feisty note: "For your information the Marine Corps is the Navy's police force and as long as I am President that is what it will remain. They have a propaganda machine that is almost equal to Stalin's . . . . The Chief of Naval Operations is the Chief of Staff of the Navy of which the Marines are a part."

He had dictated the letter to his secretary, Rose Conway, and sent it without any member of his staff seeing it.

McDonough inserted the letter into the Congressional Record where it appeared on 1 September. The story reached the newspapers four days later and a great public outcry went up. By five o'clock the next afternoon Truman's advisors had prevailed upon him to send an apology to General Cates: "I sincerely regret the unfortunate choice of language which I used." Truman, in further fence-mending, in company with Cates, made a surprise visit two mornings later at a Marine Corps League convention coincidentally being held in Washington's Statler Hotel and charmed his audience.

Pulling Together the Landing Force

General Craig's 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was relieved of its combat commitment at midnight, 5 September. The brigade had done most of its fighting with a peacetime structure, that is, at about two-thirds its authorized wartime strength: two rifle companies to a battalion instead of three, four guns to an artillery battery instead of six. The 5th Marines did not get a third company for its three infantry battalions until just before mounting out for Inchon.

The Korean 1st Marine Regiment, some 3,000 men, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Kim Sung Eun, arrived in Pusan on 5 September to join the 1st Marine Division. They were in khaki uniforms including cloth caps, and equipped with Japanese rifles and machine guns. The South Korean Marines were issued American uniforms—including helmets—and each was given one day on the rifle range to fire his new American weapons.

Built around a cadre drawn from the ROK Navy, the Korean Marine Corps ("KMCs" to the U.S. Marines) had been activated 15 April 1949. Company-size units had first deployed to southern Korea, and then to Cheju Island, to rout out Communist-bent guerrillas. After the North Korean invasion, the KMCs, growing to regimental size, had made small-scale hit-and-run raids along the west coast against the flank of the invaders.

Craig assigned Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Harrison, until recently the executive officer of the 6th Marines at Camp Lejeune, as liaison officer to the KMCs. His party, given a radio jeep, was made up of three corporal radiomen, and a corporal driver. Harrison was well-chosen. His parents had been missionaries in Korea. He himself had graduated from the foreign high school in Pyongyang in 1928 and he had a working knowledge of Korean.

While the 5th Marines were

loading out, a paper, marked "Confidential" and giving specifics on a landing beach at Kaesong, was widely distributed and one or more copies were purposely "lost." Perhaps the word got back to the North Koreans.

The amphibious assault transport *Henrico* (APA 45) known to the fleet as "Happy Hank," had brought the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, to Pusan. Now the ship received the same battalion, its numbers, thinned by the fighting in the Pusan Perimeter, now brought up to war strength. The Navy crew did their best to provide a little extra for their Marine passengers. The wardroom was made available to the officers 24 hours a day.

Marguerite "Maggie" Higgins, a movie-star-pretty blonde reporting on the war for the New York *Herald-Tribune* occupied one of the few staterooms. She had been a war correspondent in Europe during the last years of World War II and had been in Korea since the beginning of the new war. Ribald rumors as to her imagined nocturnal associations inevitably circulated throughout the ship.

Major General Field Harris, Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing—O. P. Smith's aviator counterpart—arrived in Tokyo on 3 September. His forward echelon of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, was informed of the Inchon-Seoul operation three days later. Planning for the employment of Marine air was completed on 9 September. Marine Aircraft Group 33, relieved of its close support role in the Pusan Perimeter, would be the operating element. Harris and his forward echelon embarked at Kobe on 10 September as Tactical Air Command, X Corps.

Meanwhile, Almond continued his restless visits and inspections. On 9 September, General Barr briefed him on the 7th Infantry Division's plan of operations. Almond thought the plan adequate, but was concerned over possible problems of liaison and coordination with the 1st Marine Division. Events would prove him right

Almond's Good Ideas

A restive General Almond formed, for commando work, a Special Operations Company, X Corps, sometimes called a "Raider Group," under command of Colonel Louis B. Ely, Jr., USA. With Almond's encouragement, Ely proposed a raid to seize Kimpo Airfield. Almond asked Smith for 100 Marine volunteers to join the Special Operations Company; Smith, skeptical of the mission and unimpressed by Ely, stalled in providing Marines and the request was cancelled. As it turned out, Ely and his company would make an approach to the beach, but the distance from ship to shore proved too great for rubber boats.

Brigadier General Henry I. Hodes, USA, the assistant division commander of the 7th Infantry Division, visited Smith on the *Mount McKinley* on 9 September. Almond, still concerned by Smith's deliberate manner, had come up with yet another idea for the swift seizure of Kimpo. Almond's new plan called for landing a battalion of the 32d Infantry on Wolmi-do the evening of D-Day. It would "barrel" down the road to Seoul in trucks and tanks provided by the Marines. Smith, horrified by a plan he considered tactically impossible, told Hodes that he had no tanks to lend him.

The Secretary of the Navy, alerted by parents' complaints that underage sons were being sent to Korea, on 8 September sent a last-minute order to remove Marines under 18 before sailing, reducing the landing force by about 500 men. Those who were close to being 18 were held in Japan on other duties and eventually found their way to the division as replacements.

Second Typhoon

Weathermen said that a second typhoon, "Kezia," was following close behind "Jane." Rear Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, USN, had arrived in Tokyo from Washington to be Admiral Joy's deputy chief of staff. Burke attempted to make an office call on MacArthur to express his concerns regarding the coming typhoon and was blocked by Almond. Burke refused to discuss the matter with Almond and went back to his office. By the time he got there, a message was waiting that MacArthur would see him. Burke hurried back to GHQ and explained to MacArthur that if the typhoon came up and blew west there could be no landing on the 15th or 16th.

"What do we do, Admiral?" asked MacArthur.

"We sail early," said Burke. MacArthur agreed.

Navy meteorologists had first picked up signs of Kezia off the Mariana Islands on 6 September. Whipping up winds of 100 miles per hour, the typhoon moved steadily toward Japan and the East China Sea. Most endangered were the amphibious ships of Admiral Doyle's Attack Force. The route for all six transport groups to Inchon placed them squarely in the path of the on-coming oriental hurricane.

Both Doyle and O.P. Smith, the two who would bear the burden of directing the actual landing, were painfully aware that all the normal steps of preparing for an amphibious operation were either

Photo courtesy of LtCol Leo J. Ihli, USMC (Ret)

Marines prime an F4U-4B of VMF 323 for take-off from the deck of the light aircraft carrier Badoeng Strait *(CVE 116) standing off Korea. VMF-214, embarked in sister carrier* Sicily *(CVE 118), played a companion role in close support of the assault. The bent-wing Corsairs would prove once again to be ideal close support aircraft.*

being compressed or ignored completely in order to squeeze the operation into an impossibly short time frame. During World War II, at least three months would have been spent in planning and training for an operation of this magnitude. Beginning with Guadalcanal, a rehearsal—or rehearsals—was considered essential. For Inchon there would be no rehearsal. Doyle wryly concluded that a good deal would depend upon how skillfully the individual coxswains could perform in finding their way to the beaches.

Captain Martin J. "Stormy" Sexton, a World War II Raider and now aide-de-camp to General Smith, said later: "There was not even time for landing exercises by the LVTs. Some of the LVT crews had not even had the opportunity to try their engines out in the water and paddle around."

Execution

Marine aircraft squadrons VMF-214 and VMF-323 began the softening-up of Wolmi-do on 10 September with the delivery of napalm. Operating from the decks of the light carriers *Sicily* (CVE 118) and *Badoeng Strait* (CVE 116) ("Bing-Ding" to the Marines and sailors), the Marine fliers burned out most of the buildings on the island. Strikes by Navy aircraft from the big carriers *Valley Forge* (CV 45), *Philippine Sea* (CV 47), and *Boxer* (CV 21) continued for the next two days.

Joint Task Force 7 (JTF 7) was officially activated under Admiral Struble the following day, 11 September. Almond and X Corps would be subordinate to Struble and JTF 7 until Almond assumed command ashore and JTF 7 was dissolved.

Preliminary and diversionary air and naval gunfire strikes were roughly divided into 30 percent delivered north of Inchon, 30 percent south, and 40 percent against Inchon itself. Except for a few gunnery ships held back to protect the flanks of the Pusan Perimeter, JTF 7—in its other guise, the Seventh

Joint Task Force Seven

VAdm Arthur D. Struble

Task Force 90	Attack Force	RAdm James H. Doyle
Task Force 91	Blockade and Covering Force	RAdm Sir William G. Andrewes
Task Force 92	X Corps	MajGen Edward M. Almond
Task Force 99	Control and Reconnaissance Force	RAdm George R. Henderson
Task Force 77	Fast Carrier Group	RAdm Edward C. Ewen
Task Force 79	Service Squadron	Capt Bernard L. Austin
ROK Naval Forces		Cdr Michael L. Luosey[1]

[1] Liaison and Advisor

Fleet—included all the combatant ships in the Far East. Among them were three fast carriers, two escort carriers, and a British light carrier. In the final count, the force numbered some 230 ships, including 34 Japanese vessels, mostly ex-U.S. Navy LSTs (landing ships, tank) with Japanese crews. The French contributed one tropical frigate, *La Grandiere*, which arrived at Sasebo with a five-month supply of wine and a pin-up picture of Esther Williams, but no coding machine.

Mount McKinley, with Doyle, Smith, and their staffs on board, got underway from Kobe the morning of 11 September—a day ahead of schedule because of the approach of Typhoon Kezia—and steamed for Sasebo. Winds of the typhoon whipped up to 125 miles per hour. Doyle was gambling that Kezia would veer off to the north.

Almond held a last meeting at GHQ on 12 September to deal with the urgency for an early sailing because of the threat of Kezia. General Shepherd, General Wright, and Admiral Burke attended. That afternoon General MacArthur and his party left Haneda airport to fly to Itazuke air base. From there they would go by automobile to Sasebo.

MacArthur Goes to Sea

Because of the storm the *Mount McKinley* was late in reaching port. MacArthur's party waited in the Bachelor Officers Quarters, passing the time having sandwiches. It was close to midnight before the *Mount McKinley* rounded the southern tip of Kyushu and docked at Sasebo. MacArthur and his party boarded the ship and she was underway again within an hour. With General Shepherd came his G-3, Colonel Victor H. Krulak, and his aide and future son-in-law, Major James B. Ord, Jr.

MacArthur had five generals in his party—Shepherd, Almond, and Wright, and two others: Major General Courtney Whitney—his deputy chief of staff for civil affairs, but more importantly his press officer—and Major General Alonzo P. Fox. Fox was chief of staff to MacArthur in his capacity as "SCAP" (Supreme Commander Allied Powers) and Lieutenant Haig's father-in law. Absent from the group was Lieutenant General George Stratemeyer, USAF, who had had some expectation of accompanying MacArthur as his air boss. In assignment of spaces, MacArthur grandly ignored traditional ship protocol and took over Doyle's cabin. Doyle moved to his sea cabin off the flag bridge. Almond appropriated the ship's captain's cabin. O. P. Smith managed to keep his stateroom.

After breakfast on the morning of the 13th, Admiral Doyle led the embarked flag officers in a tour of the *Mount McKinley*, hoping to impress the Army generals that amphibious operations required specialization. MacArthur did not go along.

The absence of General Stratemeyer from MacArthur's party was a clear signal that the Navy had been successful in keeping the Air Force from operating within the amphibious objective area—a circle with a 100-mile radius drawn around Inchon. There would be no FEAF operations within this radius unless specifically requested by Struble. MacArthur remained above these doctrinal squabbles.

Operation 'Common Knowledge'

Neither General MacArthur nor Admiral Struble favored extensive air and naval gunfire preparation of the objective area, primarily because it would cause a loss of tactical surprise. Their concern was largely academic. All sorts of leakage circulated in Japan—and even reached the media in the United States—that an amphibious operation was being mounted out with a probable target of Inchon. At the Tokyo Press Club the impending landing was derisively called "Operation Common Knowledge." The North Korean command almost certainly heard these rumors and almost equally certain had tide tables for Inchon. Mao Tse Tung is supposed to have pointed at Inchon on a map of Korea and have said, "The Americans will land here."

American intelligence knew that the Russians had supplied mines, but how many had been sown in Flying Fish Channel? The lack of time and sufficient minesweepers made orderly mine-sweeping operations impossible.

'Sitting Ducks'

The pre-landing naval gunfire bombardment began at 0700 on 13 September with a column of cruisers and destroyers coming up the channel. The weather was good, the sea calm. Four cruisers—*Toledo* (CA 133), *Rochester* (CA 124), HMS *Kenya*, and HMS *Jamaica*—found their bombardment stations several miles south of Inchon and dropped anchor. Six destroyers—*Mansfield* (DD 728), *DeHaven* (DD 727), *Lyman K. Swenson* (DD 729), *Collett* (DD 730), *Gurke* (DD 783), and *Henderson* (DD 785)—continued on past the cruisers and were about to earn for themselves the rueful title of "Sitting Ducks."

What appeared to be a string of mines was sighted in the vicinity of Palmi-do. The destroyers opened fire with their 40mm guns and the mines began to explode. Leaving the *Henderson* behind to continue shooting at the mines, the five other destroyers steamed closer to their objectives. *Gurke* anchored 800 yards off Wolmi-do, which was being pounded by carrier air.

The remaining four destroyers took station behind *Gurke*. Just before 1300 they opened fire. Within minutes return fire came blazing back from hidden shore batteries. *Collett* took five hits, knocking out her fire direction system; her guns switched to individual control. *Gurke* took two light hits. *DeHaven* was slightly damaged. *Lyman K. Swenson* felt a near miss that caused two casualties. After an hour's bombardment the destroyers withdrew. One man had been killed—ironically Lieutenant (Junior Grade) David Swenson, nephew of the admiral for whom the destroyer was named—and eight were wounded.

From their more distant anchorage, the cruisers picked up the bombardment with 6-inch and 8-inch salvos. After that the carrier aircraft resumed their attack.

Next day, 14 September, five of the destroyers came back (the damaged *Collett* was left behind) and banged away again. At first the destroyers drew feeble return fire. By the time they withdrew 75 minutes later, having delivered 1,700 5-inch shells, there was no return fire at all. The Navy, with considerable satisfaction, reported Wolmi-do now ready for capture.

Attack Force Gathers

Admiral Doyle had won his gamble against the typhoon. The Yellow Sea was quiet and all elements of the Attack Force were in place off Inchon. General Craig's embarked 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, having arrived from Pusan, was formally dissolved on 13 September and its parts returned to the control of the parent division. Craig became the assistant division commander.

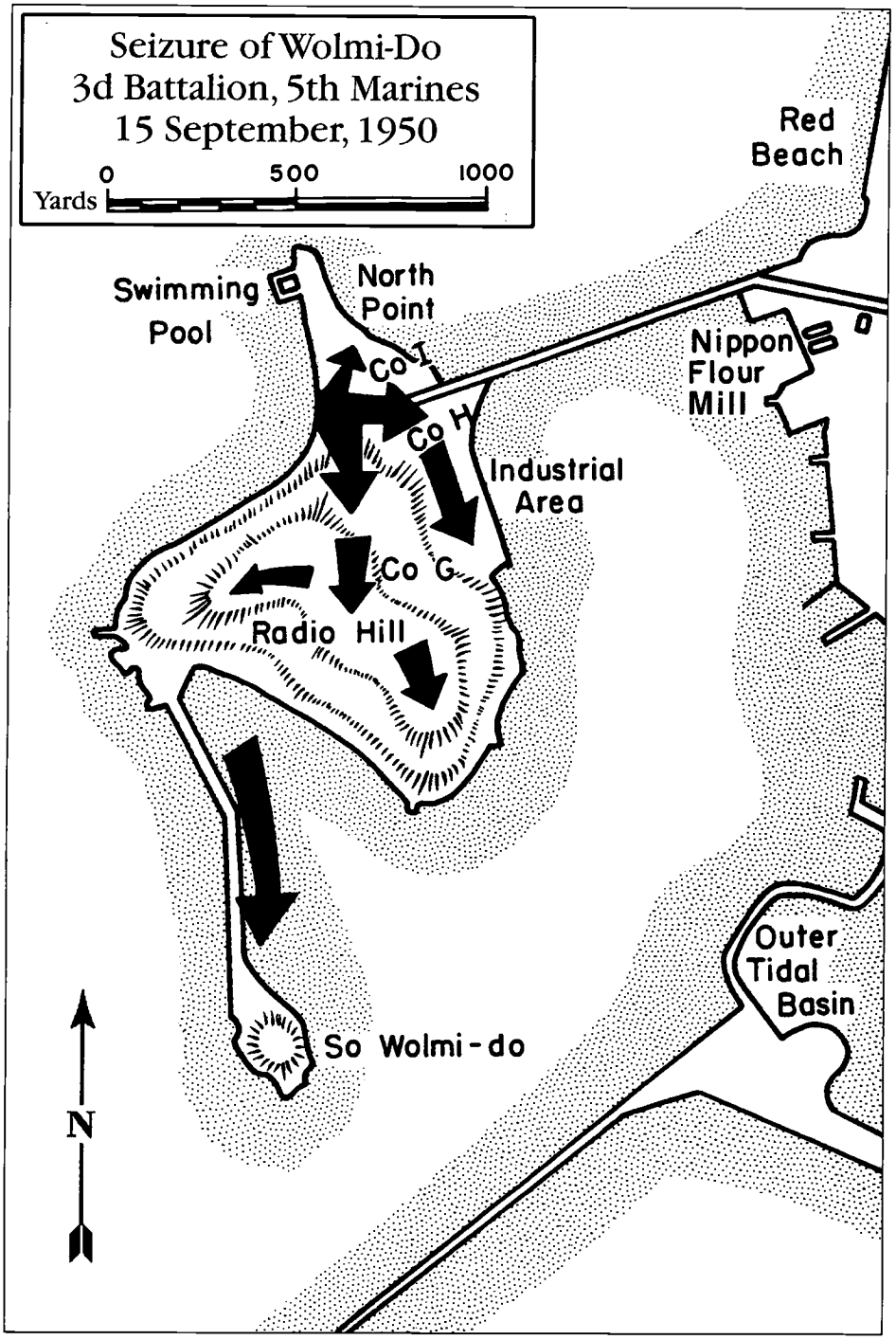
The Attack Force eased its way up Flying Fish Channel so as to be in the transport area before daylight on 15 September. General MacArthur spent a restless night. Standing at the rail of the *Mount McKinley* in the darkness, he entertained certain morbid thoughts, at least as he remembered them later in his *Reminiscences*: "Within five hours 40,000 men would act boldly, in the hope that 100,000 others manning the thin defense lines in South Korea would not die. I alone was responsible for tomorrow, and if I failed, the dreadful results would rest on judgment day against my soul."

George Gilman, an ensign in the *Mount McKinley*, had less lofty thoughts: "None of us boat group officers had ever had any experience operating under such tidal conditions before, let alone ever having been involved in an amphibious landing . . . . As the morning of September 15 approached, we realized we had all the ingredients for a disaster on our hands."

Destination Wolmi-do

L-hour was to be 0630. At 0545, the pre-landing shore bombardment began. Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. "Tap" Taplett's 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, was boated by 0600. The carrier-based Marine Corsairs completed their last sweep of the beach 15 minutes later.

"G Company was to land to the right of Green Beach in the assault, wheel right, and seize the domi-



nant hill mass on the island, Radio Hill," remembered Robert D. "Dewey" Bohn (then a first lieutenant; he would retire a major general). His company was embarked in the fast destroyer transport *Diachenko* (APD 123). She stopped her engines at about 0300, the troop compartment lights came on, and reveille sounded over the public address system.

Most of the Marines were already awake. They hoped for the traditional "steak and eggs" pre-landing breakfast of World War II; instead they got scrambled powdered eggs, dry toast, and canned apricots. At about first light, Company G went over the side and down the cargo nets into the bobbing LCVPs, which then cleared the ship and began to circle.

Three LSMRs—medium landing ships converted to rocket ships—sent their loads of thousands of 5-inch rockets screeching shoreward toward Wolmi-do. The island seemed to explode under the impact. Then the landing craft began the run to Green Beach. MacArthur, Shepherd, Almond, Smith, Whitney, and Doyle all watched from the flag bridge of the *Mount McKinley*.

Seven LCVPs brought in the first wave, one platoon of Company G on the right and three platoons of Company H on the left. The landing craft converged on the narrow beach—scarcely 50 yards wide—and grounded at 0633, three minutes behind schedule. The remainder of the two assault companies came in as the second wave two minutes later. Resistance was limited to a few scattered shots.

Captain Patrick E. Wildman, commanding Company H, left a small detachment to clear North Point and then plunged across the island toward his objectives—the northern nose of Radio Hill and the shoreline of the burning industrial area facing Inchon. After a short pause to reorganize, Bohn took Company G towards the southern half of Radio Hill, 105 meters high. Resistance was half-hearted. At 0655, Sergeant Alvin E. Smith, guide of the 3d Platoon, secured an American flag to the trunk of a shattered tree. MacArthur, watching the action ashore from his swivel chair on the bridge of the *Mount McKinley*, saw the flag go up and said, "That's it. Let's get a cup of coffee."

Ten tanks—six M-26 Pershings and four modified M-4A3 Shermans, all under Second Lieutenant Granville G. Sweet—landed in the third wave at 0646 from three utility landing ships (LSUs). They crunched their way inland, poised to help the infantry.

Lieutenant Colonel Taplett land-